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READINGS
FROM
ENGLISH HISTORY

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

JOHN RICHARD GREEN, M.A., LL.D.

Harvard College
Library



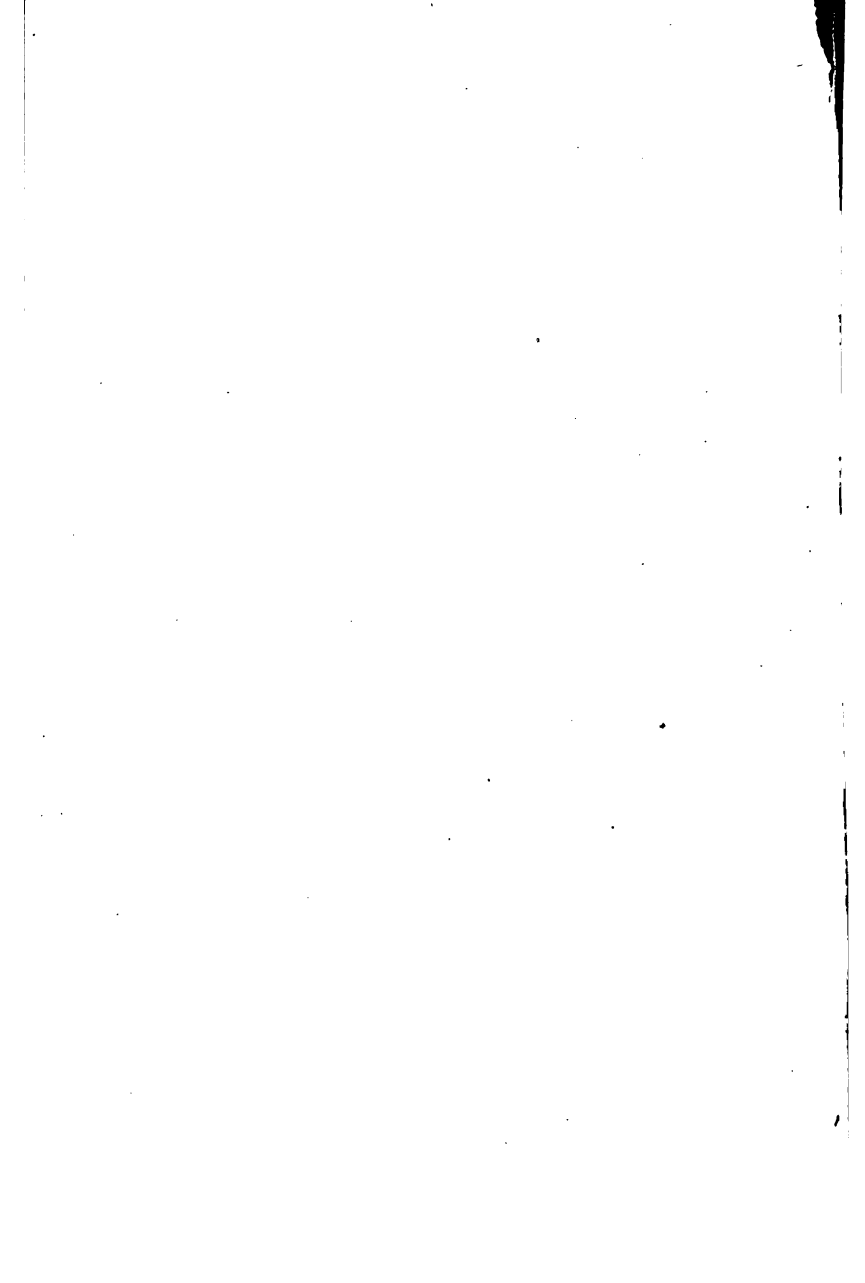
THE GIFT OF

ELIZABETH G. NORTON

OF BOSTON



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READINGS
FROM
ENGLISH HISTORY

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

JOHN RICHARD GREEN, M.A., LL.D.

HONORARY FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD

THREE PARTS IN ONE VOLUME



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Permission has kindly been given to insert the following selections from works by American authors :

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- THE LAST DAY'S FIGHT WITH THE ARMADA *John Lothrop Motley.*
- THE PILGRIM FATHERS *George Bancroft.*
- WOLFE AT QUEBEC *George Bancroft.*
- BUNKER'S HILL *George Bancroft.*

PREFACE.

My aim in compiling these books of historical extracts is a very simple and practical one.

The teaching of English History is spreading fast through our schools ; but it can hardly be said as yet to have become a popular subject of study among their scholars. In fact, if I may trust my own experience, a large proportion of boys and girls turn from it as "hard," "dry," and "uninteresting." I cannot say that the complaint is a groundless one. In their zeal to cram as many facts as possible into their pages, the writers of most historical text-books have been driven to shut out from their narratives all that gives life and colour to the story of men. History, as we give it to our children, is literally "an old almanack;" and is as serviceable as an old almanack in quickening their wits or in rousing their interest. No doubt wiser books will come in time; but meanwhile those teachers who care to appeal to more valuable faculties than that of mere memory are hard put to it to find a remedy for the "dryness" of history.

One of the most eminent of our English school-mistresses has been in the habit of breaking from time to time the history lessons of her various classes

by reading to them passages from the greater historians, illustrative of some event in the time which they were studying, and weaving these extracts into a continuous story by a few words at their opening and close. The plan is a very simple and effective one, as its success has proved, for history has become popular with her scholars, while the "dry" parts of the text-books are mastered with far greater accuracy than of old. There is but one obstacle in the way of its general adoption, but that is a serious one; for it presupposes the possession of an historical library far too large and expensive to be within the reach of the bulk of teachers.

It is this difficulty that I have tried in some degree to meet by these books of extracts. Read to a class which has fairly mastered the facts of the period which they illustrate, I trust they may solve in some measure the difficulty which has been found in enlisting the interest of the learner on the side of history, while requiring from him a steady knowledge of historical facts.

In compiling this book I have been driven here and there by sheer necessity of space to omissions and a few trivial changes, for which its purely educational character must be my excuse. I have not been able to avail myself as largely as I could have wished of passages from recent or living authors; but I have to acknowledge my obligations to Messrs. Longman, Murray, and other publishers for their permission to use extracts from works which are still their property.

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READINGS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

PART I.

FROM HENGEST TO CRESSY.



PROSE READINGS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

PART I

I.

THE EARLY ENGLISHMEN.

GREEN.

[Britain, or the island in which we live, was first made known to the civilized world by a Roman General, Julius Cæsar, in the year 55 before the birth of Christ. Cæsar had conquered Gaul, a country which included our present France and Belgium, and brought it under the rule of Rome; but in the course of his conquest he learned that to the west of Gaul lay an island named Britain, whose peoples were mainly of the same race with the Gauls and gave them help in their struggles against the Roman armies. He resolved therefore to invade Britain; and in two successive descents he landed on its shores, defeated the Britons, and penetrated at last beyond the Thames. No event in history is more memorable than this landing of Cæsar. In it the greatest man of the Roman race made known to the world a land whose people in the after-time were to recall, both in their temper and in the breadth of their rule, the temper and empire of Rome. Cæsar however was recalled from Britain by risings in Gaul; and for a hundred years more the island remained unconquered. It was not till the time of the Emperor

Claudius that its conquest was again undertaken; and a war which only ended under the Emperor Domitian at last brought all the southern part of the island under the rule of Rome. Britain remained a province of the Roman Empire for more than three hundred years. During this time its tribes were reduced to order, the land was civilized, towns were built, roads made from one end of the island to the other, mines were opened, and London grew into one of the great ports of the world. But much oppression was mingled with this work of progress, and throughout these centuries the province was wasted from time to time by inroads of the unconquered Britons of the north, whose attacks grew more formidable as Rome grew weaker in her struggle against the barbarians who beset her on every border. At last the Empire was forced to withdraw its troops from Britain, and to leave the province to defend itself against its foes. To aid in doing this, the Britons called in bands of soldiers from northern Germany, who gradually grew into a host of invaders, and became in turn a danger to the island. These were our forefathers, the first Englishmen who set foot in Britain.]

FOR the fatherland of the English race we must look far away from England itself. In the fifth century after the birth of Christ the one country which we know to have borne the name of Angeln or England lay within the district which is now called Sleswick, a district in the heart of the peninsula that parts the Baltic from the northern seas.¹ Its pleasant pastures, its black-timbered homesteads, its prim little townships looking down on inlets of purple water, were then but a wild waste of heather and sand, girt along the coast with a sunless woodland broken here and there by meadows that crept down to the marshes and the sea. The dwellers in this district however seem to have been merely an outlying fragment of what was called the

¹ *The peninsula of Sleswick-Holstein and of Jutland.*

Engle or English folk, the bulk of whom lay probably in what is now Lower Hanover and Oldenburg. On one side of them the Saxons of Westphalia held the land from the Weser to the Rhine; on the other the Eastphalian Saxons stretched away to the Elbe. North again of the fragment of the English folk in Sleswick lay another kindred tribe, the Jutes, whose name is still preserved in their district of Jutland. Engle, Saxon, and Jute all belonged to the same Low-German branch of the Teutonic family;² and at the moment when history discovers them they were being drawn together by the ties of a common blood, common speech, common social and political institutions. There is little ground indeed for believing that the three tribes looked on themselves as one people, or that we can as yet apply to them, save by anticipation, the common name of Englishmen. But each of them was destined to share in the conquest of the land in which we live; and it is from the union of all of them when its conquest was complete that the English people has sprung.

The energy of these peoples found vent in a restlessness which drove them to take part in the general attack of the German race on the empire of Rome.³ For busy tillers and busy fishers as Englishmen were, they were at heart fighters; and their world was a world of war. Tribe warred with tribe, and village with village; even within the township itself feuds parted household from household, and passions of hatred and vengeance were handed on from father to son. Their mood was above all a mood of fighting

² *Teutonic is the general name for all branches of the German race, either in Germany or elsewhere.*

³ *In the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ the Empire of Rome was attacked by the German peoples, who overran most of its provinces in the west, and founded new nations there. Thus the Franks conquered Gaul, the Lombards northern Italy; and made them France and Lombardy.*

men, venturesome, self-reliant, proud, with a dash of hardness and cruelty in it, but ennobled by the virtues which spring from war, by personal courage and loyalty to plighted word, by a high and stern sense of manhood and the worth of man. A grim joy in hard fighting was already a characteristic of the race. War was the Englishman's "shield-play" and "sword-game"; the gleeman's⁴ verse took fresh fire as he sang of the rush of the host and the crash of its shield-line. Their arms and weapons, helmet and mailshirt, tall spear and javelin, sword and seax, the short broad dagger that hung at each warrior's girdle, gathered to them much of the legend and the art which gave colour and poetry to the life of Englishmen. Each sword had its name like a living thing. And next to their love of war came their love of the sea. Everywhere throughout Beowulf's song, as everywhere throughout the life that it pictures, we catch the salt whiff of the sea. The Englishman was as proud of his sea-craft as of his war-craft; sword in teeth he plunged into the sea to meet walrus and sea-lion; he told of his whale-chase amidst the icy waters of the north. Hardly less than his love for the sea was the love he bore to the ship that traversed it. In the fond playfulness of English verse the ship was "the wave-floater," "the foam-necked," "like a bird" as it skimmed the wave-crest, "like a swan" as its curved prow breasted the "swan-road" of the sea.

Their passion for the sea marked out for them their part in the general movement of the German nations. While Goth and Lombard were slowly advancing over mountain and plain the boats of the Englishmen pushed faster over the sea. Bands of English rovers, outdriven by stress of fight, had long found a home there, and lived as they

⁴ *Gleeman is the old English name for minstrel.*

could by sack of vessel or coast. Chance has preserved for us in a Sleswick peat-bog one of the war-keels^b of these early pirates. The boat is flat-bottomed, seventy feet long and eight or nine feet wide, its sides of oak boards fastened with bark ropes and iron bolts. Fifty oars drove it over the waves with a freight of warriors whose arms, axes, swords, lances, and knives were found heaped together in its hold. Like the galleys of the Middle Ages such boats could only creep cautiously along from harbour to harbour in rough weather; but in smooth water their swiftness fitted them admirably for the piracy by which the men of these tribes were already making themselves dreaded. Its flat bottom enabled them to beach the vessel on any fitting coast; and a step on shore at once transformed the boatmen into a war-band. From the first the daring of the English race broke out in the secrecy and suddenness of the pirates' swoop, in the fierceness of their onset, in the careless glee with which they seized either sword or oar. "Foes are they," sang a Roman poet of the time, "fierce beyond other foes and cunning as they are fierce; the sea is their school of war and the storm their friend; they are sea-wolves that prey on the pillage of the world!"

II.

THE ENGLISH CONQUEST OF BRITAIN.

GIBBON.

[These English pirates were called to Britain by the Britons themselves. As troubles gathered round Rome itself, the Empire withdrew its troops and officers from the island;

^b *Keel is still in northern England the name for a boat.*

but with independence came the need of fighting for self-defence against the sea-rovers who attacked its shores, and the Picts or tribes of the Scotch Highlands who penetrated to the heart of the country. It was to repulse the Picts that Britain sought the aid of some bands of Jutes who landed under their chieftain, Hengist, in Kent, and obtained lands there in reward for their assistance. But the Jutes themselves soon became as great a danger as the Picts whom they had repulsed; as quarrels arose with Britons they called for help from their fatherland; and bands of Jutes, Saxons, and Angles descended one after another on the shores of Britain to begin a work of conquest which at last made the land their own. Faction and internal weakness aided the progress of the invaders; but the Britons fought hard for their land; and in no part of the Roman world did the German warriors find so long and so stubborn a resistance.]

UNDER the long dominion of the Emperors Britain had been insensibly moulded into the elegant and servile form of a Roman province, whose safety was intrusted to a foreign power. The subjects of Honorius¹ contemplated their new freedom with surprise and terror; they were left destitute of any civil or military constitution; and their uncertain rulers wanted either skill, or courage, or authority to direct the public force against the common enemy. The introduction of the Jutes betrayed their internal weakness, and degraded the character both of the prince and people. Their consternation magnified the danger; the want of union diminished their resources; and the madness of civil factions was more solicitous to accuse, than to remedy the evils, which they imputed to the misconduct of their

¹ *The Roman Empire was parted between two brothers, Honorius and Arcadius. Honorius ruled all its western provinces, including Britain, till the withdrawal of the Roman administration from that island in 411.*

adversaries.² Yet the Britons were not ignorant, they could not be ignorant, of the manufacture or the use of arms: the successive and disorderly attacks of the invaders allowed them to recover from their amazement, and the prosperous or adverse events of the war added discipline and experience to their native valour.

While the continent of Europe and Africa yielded without resistance to the barbarians, the British island, alone and unaided, maintained a long, a vigorous, though an unsuccessful struggle against the formidable pirates,³ who, almost at the same instant, assaulted the northern, the eastern, and the southern coasts. The cities which had been fortified with skill were defended with resolution: the advantages of ground, hills, forests, and morasses, were diligently improved by the inhabitants; the conquest of each district was purchased with blood; and the defeats of the invaders are strongly attested by the discreet silence of their annalist.⁴ Hengist might hope to achieve the conquest of Britain; but his ambition in an active reign of thirty-five years was confined to the possession of Kent. The monarchy of the West Saxons was laboriously founded by the persevering efforts of three martial generations. The life of Cerdic, one of the bravest of the children of Woden, was consumed in the conquest of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight; and the loss which he sustained in the battle of Mount Badon,⁵ reduced him to a state of inglorious repose.

Kenric, his valiant son, advanced into Wiltshire; besieged

² *It is probable that in the withdrawal of the Roman authorities two parties disputed the rule of Britain, one that of the townsfolk, who were of Roman blood and speech, the other that of the country folk, who were chiefly of British blood, and probably spoke the British tongue.*

³ *The Jutes, Engle, and Saxons, who together are known as Englishmen.*

⁴ *The Saxon Chronicler.*

⁵ *In this battle the British general, Arthur, repulsed the Saxons.*

Old Sarum, at the time seated on a commanding eminence ; and vanquished an army which advanced to the relief of the city. In a subsequent battle near Marlborough, his British enemies displayed their military science. Their troops were formed in three lines ; each line consisted of three distinct bodies ; and the cavalry, the archers, and the pikemen, were distributed according to the principles of Roman tactics. The Saxons charged in one weighty column, boldly encountered with their short swords the long lances of the Britons, and maintained an equal conflict till the approach of night. Two decisive victories, the death of three British kings, and the reduction of Cirencester, Bath, and Gloucester, established the fame and power of Ceaulin, the grandson of Cerdic, who carried his victorious arms to the banks of the Severn.

After a war of a hundred years, the independent Britons still occupied the whole extent of the western coast, from the Firth of Clyde to the extreme promontory of Cornwall ; and the principal cities of the inland country still opposed the arms of the barbarians. Resistance became more languid as the number and boldness of the assailants continually increased. Winning their way by slow and painful efforts, the Saxons, the Angles, and their various confederates, advanced from the north, from the east, and from the south, till their victorious banners were united in the centre of the island. Beyond the Severn, the Britons still asserted their national freedom, which survived the heptarchy and even the monarchy of the Saxons. The bravest warriors, who preferred exile to slavery, found a secure refuge in the mountains of Wales ;⁶ the reluctant submission of Cornwall was delayed for some ages,⁷ and a band of fugitives acquired

⁶ *South Wales was reduced by Henry the First ; North Wales retained its freedom till the time of Edward the First.* ⁷ *Its conquest was completed in the tenth century by King Æthelstan.*

a settlement in Gaul, by their own valour or the liberality of the Merovingian kings.⁸ The western angle of Armorica⁹ acquired the new appellation of *Cornwall* and the *Lesser Britain*; and the vacant lands of the Osismii were filled by a strange people, who, under the authority of their counts and bishops, preserved the laws and language of their ancestors. To the feeble descendants of Clovis and Charlemagne the Britons of Armorica refused the customary tribute, subdued the neighbouring dioceses of Vannes, Rennes, and Nantes, and formed a powerful though vassal state which has been united to the crown of France.

In a century of perpetual, or at least implacable war, much courage and some skill must have been exerted for the defence of Britain. Yet, if the memory of its champions is almost buried in oblivion, we need not repine; since every age, however destitute of science or virtue, sufficiently abounds with acts of blood and military renown. The tomb of Vortimer, the son of Vortigern,¹⁰ was erected on the margin of the sea-shore as a landmark formidable to the Jutes, whom he had thrice vanquished in the fields of Kent. Ambrosius Aurelianus¹¹ was descended from a noble family of Romans; his modesty was equal to his valour, and his valour, till the last fatal action, was crowned with splendid success. But every British name is effaced by the illustrious name of Arthur, the hereditary prince of the Silures¹² in South Wales, and the elective king or general of the nation. According to the most rational account, he defeated in twelve successive battles the Angles of the North, and the

⁸ *The Merovings or Meerwings were the royal race of the Franks, who conquered Gaul.* ⁹ *Brittany.* ¹⁰ *Vortigern was the leader of the Britons in their resistance to Hengist. He was followed in this by his son Vortimer.* ¹¹ *A head of the Roman or townsfolk party, who continued the struggle against the invaders.* ¹² *More probably a prince of Cornwall.*

Saxons of the West: but the declining age of the hero was embittered by popular ingratitude and domestic misfortunes.

The events of his life are less interesting than the singular revolutions of his fame. During a period of five hundred years the tradition of his exploits was preserved and rudely embellished by the obscure bards of Wales and Brittany, who were odious to the Saxons and unknown to the rest of mankind. The pride and curiosity of the Norman conquerors prompted them to inquire into the ancient history of Britain; they listened with fond credulity to the tale of Arthur, and eagerly applauded the merit of a prince who had triumphed over the Saxons, their common enemies. His romance, transcribed in the Latin of Jeffrey of Monmouth, and afterwards translated into the fashionable idiom of the times,¹³ was enriched with the various, though incoherent ornaments which were familiar to the experience, the learning, or the fancy of the twelfth century. The gallantry and superstition of the British hero, his feasts and tournaments, and the memorable institution of his Knights of the Round Table, were faithfully copied from the reigning manners of chivalry, and the fabulous exploits of Uther's son appear less incredible than the adventures which were achieved by the enterprising valour of the Normans. Pilgrimage and the holy wars¹⁴ introduced into Europe the specious miracles of Arabian magic. Fairies and giants, flying dragons and enchanted palaces, were blended with the more simple fictions of the West; and the fate of Britain was made to depend on the art or the predictions of Merlin.¹⁵ Every nation embraced and adorned the popular romance of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table: their names were celebrated in Greece and Italy, and the

¹³ *The French tongue.* ¹⁴ *The Crusades.* ¹⁵ *Merlin was fabled to be a great enchanter in Arthur's days, whose prophecies were held in honour through the middle ages.*

voluminous tales of Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram¹⁶ were devoutly studied by the princes and nobles, who disregarded the genuine heroes and historians of antiquity. At length the light of science and reason was rekindled; the talisman was broken; the visionary fabric melted into air; and by a natural, though unjust, reverse of the public opinion, the severity of historic criticism came to question the *existence* of Arthur.

III.

CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH.

FREEMAN.

[The fight between the Britons and their invaders was a long and stubborn one; and it was not till the end of the sixth century that the eastern half of Britain had become a country of Englishmen. But these Englishmen were broken up into many separate tribes, and were far from being as yet a single people. To bring about their union into one nation was the work of many hundred years; but the first great step made in it was the binding all the English tribes together in one Christian religion. At their conquest they had been heathen, worshipping Woden and other gods, from whom they believed their kings to have sprung, and thus their winning of Britain had driven Christianity from the land. But Gregory the Great, a bishop of Rome, who had long cherished the hope of converting them at last, sent a band of missionaries to Kent, one of the kingdoms which the English had set up in Britain, whose King Æthelberht had married a Christian

¹⁶ *Lancelot and Tristram were the two most famous knights in the fabled court of Arthur.*

wife. Their conversion of Kent was a starting-point for the conversion of Britain.]

SOME time before Gregory became Pope, perhaps about the year 574, he went one day through the market at Rome, where, among other things, there were still men, women, and children to be sold as slaves. He there saw some beautiful boys who had just been brought by a slave-merchant, boys with a fair skin and long fair hair, as English boys then would have. He asked from what part of the world they came, and whether they were Christians or heathens. He was told that they were heathen boys from the Isle of Britain. Gregory was sorry to think that forms which were so fair without should have no light within, and he asked again what was the name of their nation. "*Angles*,"¹ he was told. "*Angles*," said Gregory; "they have the faces of *Angels*, and they ought to be made fellow-heirs of the Angels in heaven. But of what province or tribe of the Angles are they?" "Of *Deira*,"² said the merchant. "*De irâ*!"³ said Gregory: "then they must be delivered from the wrath of God. And what is the name of their King?" "*Ælla*." "*Ælla*; then *Alleluia* shall be sung in his land." Gregory then went to the Pope, and asked him to send missionaries into Britain, of whom he himself would be one, to convert the English. The Pope was willing, but the people of Rome, among whom Gregory was a priest and was much beloved, would not let him go. So nothing came of the matter for some while.

We do not know whether Gregory was able to do anything for the poor little English boys whom he saw in the market, but he certainly never forgot his plan for converting the English people. After a while he became Pope him-

¹ "*Angles*" is the same word with our present word "*Englishmen*."
² *Deira* was our present Yorkshire.
³ "*De irâ*" in Latin means "*from the wrath*."

self. Of course he now no longer thought of going into Britain himself, as he had enough to do at Rome. But he now had power to send others. He therefore presently sent a company of monks, with one called Augustine at their head, who became the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and is called the Apostle of the English. This was in 597. The most powerful king in Britain at that time was Æthelberht of Kent, who is said to have been lord over all the kings south of the Humber. This Æthelberht had done what was very seldom done by English kings then or for a long time after : he had married a foreign wife, the daughter of Chariberht, one of the kings of the Franks in Gaul.⁴ Now the Franks had become Christians ; so when the Frankish Queen came over to Kent, Æthelberht promised that she should be allowed to keep to her own religion without let or hindrance. She brought with her therefore a Frankish Bishop named Liudhard, and the Queen and her Bishop used to worship God in a little church near Canterbury called Saint Martin's, which had been built in the Roman times. So you see that both Æthelberht and his people must have known something about the Christian faith before Augustine came. It does not, however, seem that either the King or any of his people had at all thought of turning Christians. This seems strange when one reads how easily they were converted afterwards. One would have thought that Bishop Liudhard would have been more likely to convert them than Augustine, for, being a Frank, he would speak a tongue not very different from English, while Augustine spoke Latin, and, if he ever knew English at all, he must have learned it after he came into the island. I cannot tell you for certain why this was. Perhaps they did not think that a man who had merely

⁴ *The Franks had conquered Roman Gaul as the English had conquered Roman Britain.*

come in the Queen's train was so well worth listening to as one who had come on purpose all the way from the great city of Rome, to which all the West still looked up as the capital of the world.

So Augustine and his companions set out from Rome, and passed through Gaul,⁵ and came into Britain, even as Cæsar had done ages before. But this time Rome had sent forth men not to conquer lands, but to win souls. They landed first in the Isle of Thanet, which joins close to the east part of Kent, and thence they sent a message to King Æthelberht saying why they had come into his land. The King sent word back to them to stay in the isle till he had fully made up his mind how to treat them; and he gave orders that they should be well taken care of meanwhile. After a little while he came himself into the isle, and bade them come and tell him what they had to say. He met them in the open air, for he would not meet them in a house, as he thought they might be wizards, and that they might use some charm or spell, which he thought would have less power out of doors. So they came, carrying an image of our Lord on the Cross wrought in silver, and singing litanies as they came. And when they came before the King, they preached the Gospel to him and to those who were with him, telling them, no doubt, how there was one God, who had made all things, and how He had sent His Son Jesus Christ to die upon the cross for mankind, and how He would come again at the end of the world to judge the quick and the dead.

So King Æthelberht hearkened to them, and he made answer like a good and wise man. "Your words and promises," said he, "sound very good unto me; but they are new and strange, and I cannot believe them all at once, nor can I leave all that I and my fathers and the whole

⁵ *Gaul here means modern France.*

English folk have believed so long. But I see that ye have come from a far country to tell us that which ye yourselves hold for truth; so ye may stay in the land, and I will give you a house to dwell in and food to eat; and ye may preach to my folk, and if any man of them will believe as ye believe, I hinder him not." So he gave them a house to dwell in in the royal city of Canterbury, and he let them preach to the people. And, as they drew near to the city, they carried their silver image of the Lord Jesus, and sang litanies, saying, "We pray Thee, O Lord, let Thy anger and Thy wrath be turned away from this city, and from Thy holy house, because we have sinned. Alleluia!" Thus Augustine and his companions dwelt at Canterbury, and worshipped in the old church where the Queen worshipped, and preached to the men of the land. And many men hearkened to them and were baptized, and before long King Æthelberht himself believed and was baptized; and before the year was out there were added to the Church more than ten thousand souls.

IV.

CADMON AND EARLY ENGLISH POETRY.

STOPFORD BROOKE.

[The work of conversion which began in Kent spread over Britain; and before another hundred years had passed every English kingdom had become Christian. With Christianity returned much of that older knowledge and learning which had been driven from the land by the English conquest. Schools were set up; and Englishmen at last began to write both in Latin and in their own

tongue. The earliest and noblest of these earlier writings were poems ; and at the head of them stand the story of Beowulf, and Cadmon's Paraphrase of the Bible. The first is the story of the deeds and death of a hero named Beowulf, which seems to have been brought into England from some Danish land, and to have been translated or re-written by some Christian poet of Northumbria. Thus Beowulf can hardly be looked upon as a true English poem. The first true English poem is that of Cadmon, which was also of Northumbrian origin.]

THE story of Cadmon, as told by Bæda,¹ proves that the making of songs was common at the time. Cadmon was a servant to the monastery of Hild, an abbess of royal blood, at Whitby in Yorkshire. He was somewhat aged when the gift of song came to him, and he knew nothing of the art of verse, so that at the feasts when for the sake of mirth all sang in turn he left the table. One night, having done so, and gone to the stables, for he had care of the cattle, he fell asleep, and one came to him in vision and said, "Cadmon, sing me some song." And he answered, "I cannot sing ; for this cause I left the feast and came hither." Then said the other, "However, you shall sing." "What shall I sing?" he replied. "Sing the beginning of created things," answered the other. Whereupon he began to sing verses to the praise of God, and, awaking, remembered what he had sung, and added more in verse worthy of God. In the morning he came to the steward, and told him of the gift he had received ; and being brought to Hild, was ordered to tell his dream before learned men, that they might give judgment whence his verses came. And when they had heard, they all said that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord.

Cadmon's Poem, written about 670, is for us the beginning

¹ *Bæda was the first English historian.*

of English poetry, and the story of its origin ought to be loved by us. Nor should we fail to reverence the place where it began. Above the small and land-locked harbour of Whitby rises and juts out towards the sea the dark cliff where Hild's monastery stood, looking out over the German Ocean. It is a wild, wind-swept upland, and the sea beats furiously beneath, and standing there one feels that it is a fitting birthplace for the poetry of the sea-ruling nation. Nor is the verse of the first poet without the stormy note of the scenery among which it was written. In it the old fierce war element is felt when Cadmon comes to sing the wrath of the rebel angels with God, and the overthrow of Pharaoh's host, and the lines, repeating, as was the old English way, the thought a second time, fall like stroke on stroke in battle. But the poem is religious throughout. Christianity speaks in it simply, sternly, with fire, and brings with it a new world of spiritual romance and feeling. The subjects of the poem were taken from the Bible; in fact Cadmon paraphrased the history of the Old and New Testament. He sang the creation of the world, the history of Israel, the book of Daniel, the whole story of the life of Christ, future judgment, purgatory, hell and heaven. All who heard it thought it divinely given. "Others after him," says Bæda, "tried to make religious poems, but none could vie with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from men, nor of men, but from God." It was thus that English song began in religion. The most famous passage of the poem not only illustrates the dark sadness, the fierce love of freedom, and the power of painting distinct characters, which has always marked our poetry, but it is also famous for its likeness to a parallel passage in Milton. It is when Cadmon describes the proud and angry cry of Satan against God from his bed of chains in hell. The two great English poets may be brought together over a space of a thousand years in another

way, for both died in such peace that those who watched beside them knew not when they died.

Of the poetry that came after Cadmon we have few remains. But we have many things said which show us that his poem, like all great works, gave birth to a number of similar ones. The increase of monasteries, where men of letters lived, naturally made the written poetry religious. But an immense quantity of secular poetry was sung about the country. Aldhelm, a young man when Cadmon died, and afterwards Abbot of Malmesbury, united the song-maker to the religious poet. He was a skilled musician, and it is said that he had not his equal in the making or singing of English verse. His songs were popular in King Ælfred's time, and a pretty story tells that when the traders came into the town on the Sunday, he, in the character of a gleeman,² stood on the bridge and sang them songs, with which he mixed up Scripture texts and teaching. Of all this widespread poetry we have now only the few poems brought together in a book preserved at Exeter, in another found at Vercelli, and in a few leaflets of manuscripts. The poems in the Vercelli book are all religious: legends of saints and addresses to the soul; those in the Exeter book are hymns and sacred poems. The famous Traveller's Song, and the Lament of Deor inserted in it, are of the older and pagan time. In both there are poems by Cynewulf, whose work is remarkably fine. They are all Christian in tone. The few touches of love of nature in them dwell on gentle, not on savage scenery. They are sorrowful when they speak of the life of men, tender when they touch on the love of home, as tender as this little bit which still lives for us out of that old world: "Dear is the welcome guest to the Frisian wife when the vessel strands; his ship is come, and

² *A minstrel.*

her husband to his house, her own provider. And she welcomes him in, washes his weedy garment, and clothes him anew. It is pleasant on shore to him whom his love awaits."

Of these scattered pieces the finest are two fragments, one long, on the story of Judith, and another short, in which Death speaks to Man, and describes "the low and hateful, and doorless house," of which he keeps the key. But stern as the fragment is, with its English manner of looking dreadful things in the face, and with its English pathos, the religious poetry of our old fathers always went with faith beyond the grave. Thus we are told that King Eadgar, in the ode on his death in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "chose for himself another light, beautiful and pleasant, and left this feeble life."

V.

ALFRED AT ATHELNEY.

LINGARD.

[Important as was this revival of learning, Christianity brought with it a yet more important result in furthering the union of the small English tribes into a single English kingdom. After long struggles this was brought about by Eggerht, King of the West-Saxons, who conquered the other English peoples, and brought all of them under his rule. But his work was soon undone. Sea-rovers from the Scandinavian lands, called the Danes, at this time attacked all the western countries of Europe; and their heaviest attack fell on Britain. They conquered all the northern, eastern, and central parts of the country; and not only broke the rule of the West-Saxon kings over them, but at last fell upon the West-Saxons themselves. Alfred, the West-Saxon king, for a time held them bravely at bay, but a sudden surprise made them masters of his country, and drove him for a while to the marshes of Athelney.]

GUTHRUM¹ had fixed his residence at Gloucester, and rewarded the services of his veterans by dividing among them the lands in the neighbourhood. But while this peaceful occupation seemed to absorb his attention, his mind was actively employed in arranging a plan of warfare, which threatened to extinguish the last of the Saxon governments in Britain. A winter campaign had hitherto been unknown in the annals of Danish devastation; after their summer expeditions the invaders had always devoted the succeeding months to festivity and repose, and it is probable that the followers of Guthrum were as ignorant as the Saxons of the real design of their leader. On the first day of the year 878 they received an unexpected summons to meet him on horseback at an appointed place; on the night of the 6th of January they were in possession of Chippenham, a royal villa on the left bank of the Avon. There is reason to believe that Alfred was in the place when the alarm was given; it is certain that he could not be at any great distance. From Chippenham, Guthrum dispersed his cavalry in different directions over the neighbouring counties; the Saxons were surprised by the enemy before they had heard of the war; and the king saw himself surrounded by the barbarians, without horses, and almost without attendants. At first he conceived the rash design of rushing on the multitude of his enemies; but his temerity was restrained by the more considerate suggestions of his friends; and he consented to reserve himself for a less dangerous and more hopeful experiment. To elude suspicion he dismissed the few thanes² who were still near his person, and endeavoured alone and on foot to gain the centre of Somersetshire. There he found a secure retreat in a small island situated in a morass formed

¹ *The leader of the Danes who attacked Wessex.* ² *Thanes were nobles who held land from the king on condition of serving him in war.*

by the conflux of the Tone and the Parret, which was afterwards distinguished by the name of Ethelingey, or Prince's Island.

Though the escape of Alfred had disappointed the hopes of the Danes, they followed up their success with indefatigable activity. The men of Hampshire, Dorset, Wilts, and Berkshire, separated from each other, ignorant of the fate of their prince, and unprepared for any rational system of defence, saw themselves compelled to crouch beneath the storm. Those who dwelt near the coast crossed with their families and treasure to the opposite shores of Gaul; the others sought to mitigate by submission the ferocity of the invaders, and by the surrender of a part to preserve the remainder of their property. One county alone, that of Somerset, is said to have continued faithful to the fortunes of Alfred; and yet in the county of Somerset he was compelled to conceal himself at Ethelingey, while the ealdorman⁸ Æthelnoth with a few adherents wandered in the woods. By degrees the secret of the royal retreat was revealed; Alfred was joined by the more trusty of his subjects; and in their company he occasionally issued from his concealment, intercepted the straggling parties of the Danes, and returned, loaded with the spoils, often of the enemy, sometimes (such was his hard necessity) of his own people. As his associates multiplied, these excursions were more frequent and successful; and at Easter, to facilitate the access to the island, he ordered a communication to be made with the land by a wooden bridge, of which he secured the entrance by the erection of a fort.

While the attention of Alfred was thus fixed on the enemy who had seized the eastern provinces of his kingdom, he was unconscious of the storm which threatened to burst on

⁸ *An ealdorman was the chief officer of a province or shire under the king.*

him from the west. Another of the sons of Ragnar,⁴ probably the sanguinary Ubbo, with three-and-twenty sail, had lately ravaged the shores of South Wales ; and, crossing to the northern coast of Devonshire, had landed his troops in the vicinity of Aplemore. It appears as if the two brothers had previously agreed to crush the king between the pressure of their respective armies. Alarmed at this new debarkation, Odun the ealdorman, with several thanes fled for security to the castle of Kynwith. It had no other fortification than a loose wall erected after the manner of the Britons ; but its position on the summit of a lofty rock rendered it impregnable. The Danish leader was too wary to hazard an assault ; and calmly pitched his tent at the foot of the mountain, in the confident expectation that the want of water would force the garrison to surrender. But Odun, gathering courage from despair, silently left his entrenchments at the dawn of morning, burst into the enemy's camp, slew the Danish chief with twelve hundred of his followers, and drove the remainder to their fleet. The bravery of the Saxons was rewarded with the plunder of Wales ; and among the trophies of their victory was the Reafan, the mysterious Standard of the Raven, woven in one noon-tide by the hands of the three daughters of Ragnar. The superstition of the Danes was accustomed to observe the bird as they marched to battle. If it appeared to flap its wings, it was a sure omen of victory ; if it hung motionless in the air, they anticipated nothing but defeat.

The news of this success infused courage into the hearts of the most pusillanimous. Alfred watched the reviving spirit of his people, and by trusty messengers invited them to meet him in the seventh week after Easter at the stone of

⁴ *Ragnar was a Danish hero, who was said to have been slain in England, and whose sons swore to avenge his death by conquering the island. Guthrum was one of these sons, Ubbo another.*

Egbert, in the eastern extremity of Selwood⁵ forest. On the appointed day the men of Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Somerset cheerfully obeyed the summons. At the appearance of Alfred they hailed the avenger of their country; the wood echoed their acclamations; and every heart beat with the confidence of victory. But the place was too confined to receive the multitudes that hastened to the royal standard; and the next morning the camp was removed to Iglea, a spacious plain lying on the skirts of the wood, and covered by marshes in its front. The day was spent in making preparations for the conflict, and in assigning their places to the volunteers that hourly arrived; at the dawn of the next morning Alfred marshalled his forces, and occupied the summit of Ethandune, a neighbouring and lofty eminence.

In the meanwhile Guthrum had not been an idle spectator of the motions of his adversary. He had recalled his scattered detachments, and was advancing with hasty steps to chastise the insolence of the insurgents. As the armies met they vociferated shouts of mutual defiance; and after the discharge of their missive weapons, rushed to a closer and more sanguinary combat. The shock of the two nations, the efforts of their leaders, the fluctuations of victory, and the alternate hopes and fears of the contending armies, must be left to the imagination of the reader. The Danes displayed a courage worthy of their former renown and their repeated conquests. The Saxons were stimulated by every motive that could influence the heart of man. Shame, revenge, the dread of subjugation, and the hope of independence, impelled them forward; their perseverance bore down all opposition; and the Northmen, after a most obstinate but unavailing resistance, fled in crowds to their camp.

⁵ *The great forest of Selwood ran along the valley of the Frome and by Dorset to the sea.*

The pursuit was not less murderous than the engagement the Saxons immolated to their resentment every fugitive who fell into their hands. Immediately, by the king's orders, lines were drawn round the encampment ; and the escape of the survivors was rendered impracticable by the vigilance and the multitude of their enemies. Famine and despair subdued the obstinacy of Guthrum, who on the fourteenth day offered to capitulate. The terms imposed by the conqueror were : that the king and principal chieftains should embrace Christianity ; that they should entirely evacuate his dominions ; and that they should bind themselves to the fulfilment of the treaty by the surrender of hostages, and by their oaths. After a few weeks, Guthrum, with thirty of his officers, was baptized at Aulre, near Athelney. He took the surname of Athelstan, and Alfred was his sponsor. After the ceremony both princes removed to Wedmore, where on the eighth day Guthrum put off the white robe and chrysmal fillet, and on the twelfth bade adieu to his adopted father, whose generosity he had now learned to admire as much as he had before respected his valour.

VI.

ALFRED AND HIS BOOKS.

PALGRAVE.

[The triumph over Guthrum secured Wessex, or southern England, from the Danes ; and gave Alfred leisure to prepare for the re-conquest of the rest of the country. For this purpose he steadily got ready a new fleet and army. But he did more to gather England round him

by showing in himself what a true and noble king should be, by living uprightly and ruling justly; and by doing what he could to restore to England the law and good government which seemed to have perished in the troubles of the time. Not less earnestly did he strive to restore learning, which had suffered most of all; and in the face of overwhelming difficulties he did so much, both by himself and through other scholars, that as English poetry is said to begin with Cadmon, so English prose looks back for its beginning to Alfred.]

ALFRED was wholly ignorant of letters until he attained twelve years of age. He was greatly loved by his parents, who fondled the boy for his beauty; but that instruction which the poorest child can now acquire with the greatest ease was withheld from the son of the Anglo-Saxon king. Alfred was taught to wind the horn and to bend the bow, to hunt and to hawk; and he acquired great skill in the art of the chase, considered throughout the middle ages as the most necessary accomplishment of the nobility, whilst book-learning was thought of little use to them. Alfred's eager mind did not, however, remain unemployed. Though he could not read he could attend and he listened eagerly to the verses which were recited in his father's hall by the minstrels and the gleemen, the masters of Anglo-Saxon song. Day and night would he employ in hearkening to these poems; he treasured them in his memory, and during the whole of his life, poetry continued to be his solace and amusement in trouble and care.

It chanced one day that Alfred's mother, Osburgha, showed to him and his brothers a volume of Anglo-Saxon poetry which she possessed. "He who first can read the book shall have it," said she. Alfred's attention was attracted by the bright gilding and colouring of one of the illuminated capital letters. He was delighted with the gay volume, and enquired of his mother,—would she really keep

her word? She confirmed the promise, and put the book into his hands; and he applied so steadily to his task, that the book became his own.

The information which Alfred now possessed rendered him extremely desirous of obtaining more; but his ignorance of Latin was an insuperable obstacle. Science and knowledge could not then be acquired otherwise than from Latin books; and earnestly as he sought for instruction in that language, none could be found. Sloth had overspread the land;¹ and there were so few "Grammarians," that is to say Latinists, in Wessex, that he was utterly unable to discover a competent teacher. In after life, Alfred was accustomed to say, that of all the hardships, privations, and misfortunes which had befallen him, there was none which he felt so grievous as this, the enforced idleness of his youth, when his intellect would have been fitted to receive the lesson, and his time was unoccupied. At a more advanced period, the arduous toils of royalty, and the pressure of most severe and unintermitting pain, interrupted the studies which he was then enabled to pursue, and harassed and disturbed his mind,—yet he persevered;—and the unquenchable thirst for knowledge which the child had manifested, continued, without abatement, until he was removed from this stage of exertion. When the Treaty of Wedmore freed him from the Danes, Alfred's plans for the intellectual cultivation of his country were directed, in the first instance, to the diffusion of knowledge amongst the great body of the people. Hence he earnestly recommended the translation "of useful books into the language which we all understand; so that all the youth of England, but more especially those who are of gentle-kind and at ease in their circumstances, may be grounded in letters,—for they cannot profit in any pursuit

¹ Or rather, the war with the Danes had discouraged learning.

until they are well able to read English." This opinion is extracted from a document appearing to have been a circular letter addressed by Alfred to the Bishops; and the desire which it expresses is the best proof of the sincerity of his intentions, and the grasp and comprehensiveness of his mind. Much had been done on the Continent for the cultivation of learning, particularly by Charlemagne; but the munificence of the Frankish emperor, and of those who thought like him, was calculated to confine the gift within the pale of the cloister. The general tendency of the middle ages was to centre all erudition in a particular caste, severed from the rest of society. Alfred's labours, on the contrary, were directed to enable every individual to have a share, according to his station and degree, in the common inheritance of wisdom

Alfred taught himself Latin by translating. You will recollect his regret at the want of masters in early life. As soon as he was settled in his kingdom he attempted to supply this deficiency, not only for himself, but also for his people, by inviting learned men from foreign parts. Asser, a native of St. David's, whom he appointed Bishop of Sherbourne, was one of them. Great confidence and friendship prevailed between Alfred and the British priest; and to the pen of Asser we owe a biography of the Anglo-Saxon monarch, written with equal simplicity and fidelity. Grimbold, at the invitation of Alfred, left Gaul, his own country, and settled in England. A third celebrated foreigner was called Johannes *Scotus*, from his nation, or *Erigena*, the Irishman, from the place of his birth. From these distinguished men, to whom must be added Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, Alfred was enabled to acquire that learning which he had so long sought. Asser permits us to contemplate Alfred beginning his literary labours. They were engaged in pleasant converse; and it chanced that

Asser quoted a text or passage, either from the Bible or from the works of some of the Fathers. Alfred asked his friend to write it down in a blank leaf of that collection of psalms and hymns which he always carried in his bosom; but not a blank could be found of sufficient magnitude. Pursuant therefore to Asser's proposal, a *quire*, or *quaternion*, that is to say, a sheet of vellum folded into *fours*, was produced, on which these texts were written; and Alfred afterwards working upon them, translated the passages so selected into the Anglo-Saxon tongue.

He continued the practice of writing down such remarkable passages as were quoted in conversation. His "hand-boc" or manual, however, included some matters of his own observation, anecdotes, or sayings of pious men; but the body of the collection appears to have consisted of extracts from the Scriptures, intermingled with reflections of a devotional cast. He attempted a complete version of the Bible, and some have supposed that he completed the greater portion of the task; but it seems that the work was prevented by his early death. As far as we can judge from those portions of the plan which were carried into execution, his translations were intended to present a complete course of such works as were then considered the most useful and best calculated to form the groundwork of a liberal education. The chronicle of Orosius was the best compendium of universal history which had yet been composed. In translating this work Alfred presented his subjects with a geographical account of the natives of Germany; and the voyages of Other towards the North Pole, and of Wolfstan in the Baltic, were detailed as these travellers related them to the king. The history of Bæda, which was also rendered into English, instructed the learner in the annals of his own country. In this work Alfred did not depart from his original; but in his version of the "Consolations of Philo-

sophy," by Boethius, the narratives taken from ancient mythology, like the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, are expanded into pleasing tales, such as the gleeman recited during the intervals of his song. "Pastoral Instructions" of St. Gregory and the "Dialogues" composed by that Pope, also form a portion of Alfred's translations, and are yet existing. His other works are no longer extant; and we must lament the loss of his "Apologues" of "wonderful sweetness," which seem to have been a collection of Esopian fables imitated from Phædrus, or perhaps from some other of the collections into which these eastern parables had been transfused.

VII.

DUNSTAN.

GREEN.

[Death removed Alfred before he could carry out his plans of winning back England from the Danes; but this was done by the kings of his house who followed him, Eadward, Æthelstan, and Eadmund. The Danes were conquered after long struggles, and all England brought under the West-Saxon rule. The last great struggle took place under King Eadred; and the final settlement of the country was brought about by his friend and counsellor, the Abbot Dunstan, who remained minister of the kingdom through the reign of the greatest of those kings, Eadgar.]

THE completion of the West-Saxon realm was reserved for the hands, not of a king or warrior, but of a priest. Dunstan stands first in the line of ecclesiastical statesmen who counted among them Lanfranc and Wolsey

and ended in Laud. He is still more remarkable in himself, in his own vivid personality, after eight centuries of revolution and change. He was born in the little hamlet of Glastonbury,¹ the home of his father, Heorstan, a man of wealth and brother of the bishops of Wells and of Winchester. It must have been in his father's hall that the fair, diminutive boy, with his scant but beautiful hair, caught his love for "the vain songs of heathendom, the trifling legends, the funeral chaunts," which afterwards roused against him the charge of sorcery. Thence too he may have derived his passionate love of music, and his custom of carrying his harp in hand on journey or visit. Wandering scholars of Ireland² had left their books in the monastery of Glastonbury, as they left them along the Rhine and the Danube; and Dunstan plunged into the study of sacred and profane letters till his brain broke down in delirium. So famous became his knowledge in the neighbourhood that news of it reached the court of Æthelstan,³ but his appearance there was the signal for a burst of ill-will among the courtiers. They drove him from the king's train, threw him from his horse as he passed through the marshes, and with the wild passion of their age trampled him under foot in the mire.

The outrage ended in fever, and Dunstan rose from his sick-bed a monk. But the monastic profession was then little more than a vow of celibacy,⁴ and his devotion took no ascetic turn. His nature in fact was sunny, versatile, artistic; full of strong affections, and capable of inspiring others with affections as strong. Quick-witted, of tenacious

¹ *Near Wells in Somerset.* ² *Ireland in early times was full of schools and learning, and its scholars and missionaries wandered over Europe. This learning came to an end with the ravages of the Danes.* ³ *King Æthelstan was the grandson of Alfred.* ⁴ *That is, abstinence from marriage.*

memory, a ready and fluent speaker, gay and genial in address, an artist, a musician ; he was at the same time an indefatigable worker at books, at building, at handicraft. As his sphere began to widen we see him followed by a train of pupils, busy with literature, writing, harping, painting, designing. One morning a lady summoned Dunstan to her house to design a robe which she was embroidering, and as he bent with her maidens over their toil his harp hung upon the wall sounded, without mortal touch, tones which the excited ears around framed into a joyous antiphon.

From this scholar-life Dunstan was called to a wider sphere of activity by the accession of Eadmund.⁵ But the old jealousies revived at his reappearance at court, and, counting the game lost, Dunstan prepared again to withdraw. The King had spent the day in the chase ; the red deer which he was pursuing dashed over Cheddar cliffs,⁶ and his horse only checked itself on the brink of the ravine at the moment when Eadmund in the bitterness of death was repenting of his injustice to Dunstan. He was at once summoned on the King's return. "Saddle your horse," said Eadmund, "and ride with me." The royal train swept over the marshes to his home ; and the King, bestowing on him the kiss of peace, seated him in the abbot's chair as Abbot of Glastonbury. Dunstan became one of Eadmund's councillors and his hand was seen in the settlement of the North. It was the hostility of the states around it to the West-Saxon rule which had roused so often revolt in the Danelagh ; but from this time we hear nothing more of the hostility of Bernicia,⁷ while Strathclyde was conquered

⁵ *The son and successor of Æthelstan.* ⁶ *In the Mendip Hills of Somerset.* ⁷ *Bernicia comprized all England between Yorkshire and the Firth of Forth. Strathclyde was the country from the Firth of Clyde southward to near Carlisle.*

by Eadmund and turned adroitly to account in winning over the Scots to his cause. The greater part of it was granted to their King Malcolm on terms that he should be Eadmund's fellow-worker by sea and land. The league of Scot and Briton was thus finally broken up, and the fidelity of the Scots secured by their need of help in holding down their former ally.

The settlement was soon troubled by the young king's death. As he feasted at Pucklechurch in the May of 946, Leofa, a robber whom Eadmund had banished from the land, entered the hall, seated himself at the royal board, and drew sword on the cup-bearer when he bade him retire. The king sprang in wrath to his thegn's aid, and seizing Leofa by the hair flung him to the ground; but in the struggle the robber drove his dagger to Eadmund's heart. His death at once stirred fresh troubles in the north; the Danelagh⁸ rose against his brother and successor, Eadred, and some years of hard fighting were needed before it was again driven to own the English supremacy. But with its submission in 954 the work of conquest was done. Dogged as his fight had been, the Northman at last owned himself beaten. From the moment of Eadred's final triumph all resistance came to an end. The Danelagh ceased to be a force in English politics. North might part anew from South; men of Yorkshire might again cross swords with men of Hampshire; but their strife was henceforth a local strife between men of the same people; it was a strife of Englishmen with Englishmen, and not of Englishmen with Northmen.

The death of Eadred in 955 handed over the realm to a child king, his nephew Eadwig. Eadwig was swayed by a woman of high lineage, Æthelgifu; and the quarrel between

⁸ *All from the Tees southward to a line across Mid-England was settled by Danes and called the Danelagh.*

her and the older counsellors of Eadred broke into open strife at the coronation feast. On the young king's insolent withdrawal to her chamber, Dunstan, at the bidding of the Witan, drew him roughly back to his seat. But the feast was no sooner ended than a sentence of outlawry drove the abbot over sea, while the triumph of Æthelgifu was crowned in 957 by the marriage of her daughter to the King and the spoliation of the monasteries which Dunstan had befriended. As the new Queen was Eadwig's kinswoman, the religious opinion of the day regarded his marriage as incestuous, and it was followed by a revolution. At the opening of 958 Archbishop Odo⁹ parted the King from his wife by solemn sentence; while the Mercians¹⁰ and Northumbrians rose in revolt, proclaimed Eadwig's brother Eadgar their King, and recalled Dunstan. The death of Eadwig a few months later restored the unity of the realm, but his successor Eadgar was only a boy of fourteen, and throughout his reign the actual direction of affairs lay in the hands of Dunstan, whose devotion to the See of Canterbury set him at the head of the Church as of the State. The noblest tribute to his rule lies in the silence of our chroniclers. His work indeed was a work of settlement, and such a work was best done by the simple enforcement of peace. During the years of rest in which the stern hand of the Primate enforced justice and order Northmen and Englishmen drew together into a single people. Their union was the result of no direct policy of fusion; on the contrary Dunstan's policy preserved to the conquered Danelagh its local rights and local usages. But he recognized the men of the Danelagh as Englishmen, he employed Northmen in the royal service, and promoted them to high posts in Church and State. For the rest he trusted to time, and time justified his trust. The fusion was marked by a memorable change in the name of

⁹ *Archbishop of Canterbury.* ¹⁰ *People of mid-England.*

the land. Slowly as the conquering tribes had learned to know themselves by the one national name of Englishmen, they learned yet more slowly to stamp their name on the land they had won. It was not till Eadgar's day that the name of Britain passed into the name of Engla-land, the land of Englishmen, England.

VIII.

BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

FREEMAN.

[England had now become a great kingdom : but it had yet sore trials to bear before Englishmen could be thoroughly welded and blended together into one people, looking on themselves as a single nation. First, as the kingdom grew weak under Eadgar's successors, came a second Danish attack, which ended for a while in the conquest of England, and in its rule by the Danish king Cnut. But the oppression of his sons put an end to the Danish rule ; and the old English kingdom was set up again under Eadward the Confessor, who was guided by wise ministers, Earl Godwine and his son Harold. On Eadward's death, however, Harold sought the crown, and had himself chosen king. This woke rivalry and dissension among the other nobles, and so laid England open to the ambition of its neighbour over-sea, William the Duke of the Normans. Pretending that the Confessor had named him as his successor, William crossed the Channel with a great army, and landing at Pevensey marched to the field of Senlac, north of the town of Hastings, and near to the present town of Battle, to which the fight that followed gave its name. Here he found Harold with an English army awaiting his attack on a low hill or rise of ground, which he had strengthened with barricades.]

KING Harold had risen early and had put his men in order. On the slope of the hill, just in the face of William's army as it came from Hastings, he planted the two ensigns which were always set up in an English royal army, and between which the King had his royal post. The one was the golden Dragon, the old ensign of Wessex; the other was the Standard, which seems to have been the King's own device. King Harold's Standard was a great flag, richly adorned with precious stones and with the figure of a fighting-man wrought upon it in gold. As the English thus had two ensigns, they had also two war-cries. They shouted "God Almighty," which I take to have been the national war-cry, and they also shouted "Holy Cross," that is no doubt the Holy Cross of Waltham which King Harold held in such reverence. Perhaps this last was the cry of the King's own men. For there were in the English army two very different kinds of men. There were King Harold's own followers, his own kinsmen and friends and Thaness¹ and housecarls, the men of whom the Northmen said that any one could fight any other two men. These were in short the men who had won the fight of Stamfordbridge.² They wore coats of mail, and they had javelins to hurl at the beginning of the fight, and their great two-handed axes to use when the foe came to close quarters. But besides these tried soldiers there were the men who came together from the whole South and East of England, who were armed as they could arm themselves, many of them very badly. Most of them had no coats of mail or other armour, and many had neither swords nor

¹ *Thaness were nobles who were bound to fight for their lord, housecarls were soldiers kept specially for the king's service.*

² *Just before William's landing, Harold had fought and beaten at Stamfordbridge his own brother Tostig, who had invaded England with an army of Northmen under their king, Harold Hardrada.*

axes. Some of them had pikes, forks, anything they could bring; a very few seem to have had bows and arrows. Now in a battle on the open ground these men would have been of no use at all; the Norman horsemen would have trampled them down in a moment. But even these badly armed troops, when placed on the hill side, behind barricades, could do a good deal in driving the Normans back as they rode up. But as far as I can see King Harold put these bad troops in the back, towards what we may call the isthmus of the peninsula,³ where the worse troops on the other side were likely to make the attack. But his picked men he put in front, where the best troops of the enemy were likely to come.

Thus the English stood on the hill ready for the French host, horse and foot, who were coming across from Telham to attack them. About nine o'clock on Saturday morning they came near to the foot of the hill. The Norman army was in three parts. Alan⁴ and the Bretons had to attack on the left, to the west of the Abbey buildings. Roger of Montgomery with the French and Picards were on the right, near where the railway station is now. Duke William himself and the native Normans were in the midst, and they came right against the point of the hill which was crowned by the Standard, where King Harold himself stood ready for them.

And now began the great battle of Senlac or Hastings. The Norman archers let fly their arrows against the English; then the heavy-armed foot were to come up; and lastly the horsemen. They hoped of course that the shower of arrows would kill many of the English and put the rest

³ *The ground on which the English army stood was a low rise, cut off from the ground near it, and so like a peninsula.*

⁴ *The Count of Brittany, who had brought troops to William's aid.*

into confusion, and that the heavy-armed foot would then be able to break down the barricades, so that the horsemen might ride up the hill. But first of all a man named, or rather nicknamed, *Taillefer* or *Cut-iron*, rode out alone from the Norman ranks. He was a juggler or minstrel, who could sing songs and play tricks, but he was a brave man all the same, and he asked Duke William's leave that he might strike the first blow, hand to hand. So Taillefer the minstrel rode forth, singing as he went, like Harold Hardrada at Stamfordbridge, and, as some say, throwing his sword up in the air and catching it again. As he came near to the English line, he managed to kill one man with his lance and another with his sword, but then he was cut down himself. Then the French army pressed on at all points, shouting "God help us," while our men shouted, "God Almighty" and "Holy Cross." They tried very hard, first the foot and then the horse, to break down the barricade. But it was all in vain. The English hurled their javelins at them as they were drawing near, and when they came near enough, they cut them down with their axes. The Norman writers themselves tell us how dreadful the fight was, and how the English axe, in the hand of King Harold or of any other strong man, cut down the horse and his rider with a single blow.

Duke William and his army tried and tried again to get up the hill, but it was all in vain; our men did not swerve an inch, and they cut down every Frenchman who came near, King Harold himself and his brothers fighting among the foremost. Soon the French lines began to waver; the Bretons on the right turned and fled, and soon the Normans themselves followed. The English were now sorely tempted to break their lines and pursue, which was just what King Harold had told them not to do. Some of them, seemingly the troops in the rear, where the Bretons had first given way,

were foolish enough to disobey the King's orders, and to follow their flying enemies down into the plain. It seemed as if the French were utterly beaten, and a cry was raised that Duke William himself was dead. So, just as our King Edmund ⁵ had done at Sherstone, he tore off his helmet that men might see that he was alive, and cried out, "I live, and by God's help I will conquer." Then he and his brother the Bishop contrived to bring their men together again. They turned again to the fight; those who were pursued by the English cut their pursuers in pieces, and another assault on the hill began. Duke William this time had somewhat better luck. He got so near to the barricade just before the Standard that Earl Gyrrh, who we know fought near his brother the King, was able to hurl a spear directly at him. It missed the Duke, but his horse was killed and fell under him, as two others did before the day was out. Duke William then pressed on on foot, and met Gyrrh face to face, and slew him with his own hand. Earl Leofwine too was killed about the same time, and Roger of Montgomery and his Frenchmen on the right contrived to break down part of the barricade on that side.

So this second attack was by no means so unsuccessful as the first. The two Earls were killed, and the barricade was beginning to give way. Still Duke William saw that he could never win the battle by making his horsemen charge up the hill in the teeth of the English axes. He saw that his only chance was to tempt the English to break their shield-wall, and come down into the plain. So he tried a very daring and dangerous trick. He had seen the advantage which by his good generalship he had contrived to gain out of the real flight of his men a little time before; so he ordered his troops to pretend flight, and, if the English followed, to turn upon them. And

⁵ *Edmund Ironside.*

so it was ; the whole French army seemed to be fleeing a second time ; so a great many of the English ran down the hill to chase them. As far as I can make out, it was only the light-armed, the troops on the right, who did this ; I do not think that any of King Harold's own housecarls left their ranks. But presently the Normans turned, and now the English had to fly. Those who had made this great mistake did their best to make up for it. Some managed to seize a little hill which rose in front of the English position, and thence they hurled down javelins and stones on those who attacked them, and thus they completely cut off a party who were sent against them. Others, who knew the ground well, led the Frenchmen who chased them to a place near the isthmus where the ground is very rough, and where there is a little narrow cleft with steep sides, all covered with bushes and low trees. So the Normans came riding on, and their horses came tumbling head over heels into the trap which was thus ready for them, and the English who were flying now turned round and killed the riders.

All this was bravely and cleverly done ; but it could not recover the battle, now that King Harold's wise orders had once been disobeyed. The English line was broken ; the hill was defenceless at many points ; so the Normans could ride up, and the battle was now fought on the hill. The fight was by no means over yet ; the English had lost their great advantage of the ground ; but King Harold and all his mighty men were still there ; so they still formed their shield-wall and fought with their great axes. Luck had no doubt turned against the English ; still they were by no means beaten yet, and it is by no means clear that they would have been beaten after all, if King Harold had only lived till nightfall. Here, as always in these times, everything depended on one man. Harold still

lived and fought by his Standard, and it was against that point that all the devices of the Normans were now aimed. The Norman archers had begun the fight, and the Norman archers were now to end it. Duke William now bade them shoot up in the air, that the arrows might fall like bolts from heaven. This device proved the most successful of all; some men were pierced right through their helmets; others had their eyes put out; others lifted up their shields to guard their heads, and so could not wield their axes so well as before. King Harold still stood—you may see him in the Tapestry,⁶ standing close by the Golden Dragon, with his axe in his hand, and his shield pierced with several arrows. But now the hour of our great King was come. Every foe who had come near him had felt the might of that terrible axe, but his axe could not guard against this awful shower of arrows. One shaft, falling, as I said, from heaven, pierced his right eye; he clutched at it and broke off the shaft; his axe dropped from his hand, and he fell, all disabled by pain, in his own place as King, between the two royal ensigns. Twenty Norman knights swore to take the Standard now that the King no longer defended it; they rushed on; most of them were killed by the English who still fought around their wounded King; but those who escaped succeeded in beating down the Standard of the Fighting Man and in bearing off the Golden Dragon. That ancient ensign, which had shone over so many battlefields, was never again carried before a true English King. Then four knights, one of whom was Count Eustace, rushed upon King Harold as he lay dying; they killed him with several wounds, and mangled his body. Such was the end of the last native King of the

⁶ *At Bayeux is preserved a long roll of linen, on which is worked the story of the Norman Conquest, perhaps by the hand of William's queen, Matilda.*

English, Harold the son of Godwine. He fell by the most glorious of deaths, fighting for the land and the people which he had loved so well.

IX.

THE HARRYING OF THE NORTH.

FREEMAN.

[The work of conquest which began at Hastings was carried out in a series of campaigns which left William after five years of warfare undisputed master of England. Of the suffering which this warfare caused the most terrible instance was the pitiless laying waste of all Northern England, from which the most formidable resistance had come.]

Now came that fearful deed, half of policy, half of vengeance, which has stamped the name of William with infamy, and which forms a clearly marked stage in the downward course of his moral being. He had embarked in a wrongful undertaking ; but hitherto we cannot say that he had aggravated the original wrong by reckless or wanton cruelties. But, as ever, wrong avenged itself by leading to deeper wrong. The age was a stern one, and hitherto William had certainly not sinned against the public opinion of the age. Hitherto he had been on the whole a merciful conqueror. He had shown that he belonged to another type of beings from the men who had wasted his own Duchy in his childhood, and from the men on whom¹ Siward and Tostig had striven to put some check within the land

¹ *Siward and Tostig had been successively Earls of Northumbria, and had ruled its wild population with terrible sternness.*

which he had now won. Siward and Tostig were both of them men of blood, stained with the guilt of private murder, from which we may be sure that William would have shrunk at any time of his life. But we may be no less sure that Siward and Tostig, harsh as they were, would have shrunk from the horrors which William now proceeded deliberately to inflict on Northern England.

The harryings of which Sussex and Kent had seen something on his first landing² were now to be carried out far more systematically, far more unflinchingly, through the whole of Yorkshire and several neighbouring shires. The King took the work of destruction as his personal share of the conquest of Northumberland. He left others to build his castles in York; he left others to watch the Danish fleet in the Humber;³ but he himself went through the length and breadth of the land, through its wildest and most difficult regions, alike to punish the past revolts of its people and to cripple their power of engaging in such revolts for the time to come. That all who resisted were slain with the sword was a matter of course. But now William went to and fro over points a hundred miles from one another, destroying, as far as in him lay, the life of the earth. It was not mere plunder, which may at least enrich the plunderer; the work of William at this time was simple unmitigated havoc. Houses were everywhere burned with all that was in them; stores of corn, goods and property of every kind, were brought together and destroyed in the like sort; even living animals seem to have been driven to perish in the universal burning.

The authentic records of the Conquest give no hint of any exceptions being made or favour being shown in any

² *Before the battle of Hastings.* ³ *The revolt which William had come to suppress had begun at York, and had been supported by a Danish fleet, which appeared in the Humber.*

part of the doomed region. But local legends as usual supply their tale of wonder. Beverley was saved by the interposition of its heavenly patron, the canonized Archbishop John.⁴ The King had pitched his camp seven miles from the town, when news was brought that the people of the whole neighbourhood had taken shelter with all their precious things in the inviolable sanctuary which was afforded by the frithstool⁵ of the saint. On hearing this, some plunderers, seemingly without the royal orders, set forth to make a prey of the town and of those who had sought shelter in it. They entered Beverley without meeting with any resistance, and made their way to the churchyard, where a vast crowd of people was gathered together. The leader of the band, Toustain by name, marked out an old man in goodly apparel with a golden bracelet on his arm. This was doubtless the badge of his official rank, or the prize which Harold or Siward or some other bracelet-giver⁶ had bestowed as the reward of good service against Scot or Briton or Northman. The Englishmen fled within the walls of the minster. The sacrilegious Toustain, sword in hand, spurred his horse within the consecrated doors. But the vengeance of Saint John of Beverley did not slumber. The horse fell with its neck broken, and Toustain himself, smitten in his own person, his arms and legs all twisted behind his back, no longer seemed a man but a monster. His affrighted comrades laid aside all their schemes of plunder and slaughter, and humbly implored the mercy of the saint. They made their way back to William and told him the tale of wonder. The King had already shown himself a friend to the church of Saint John, and now, fearing the wrath of

⁴ John was Archbishop of York in early days, and canonized as St. John of Beverley.

⁵ The shrine of a saint was held to give shelter to all.

⁶ Bracelets or armlets were given in reward of good service, as medals are now.

the saint, he summoned the chief member of the chapter before him, and again confirmed all their possessions by charters under the royal seal. He added new grants of land and precious gifts for the adornment of the minster, and, what was of more immediate value than all, that there might be no further danger of the peace of Saint John being broken, he at once broke up his camp by sound of trumpet, and removed his headquarters to a place far removed from the hallowed spot.

The lands of Saint John of Beverley were thus, according to the local legend, spared among the general havoc, and remained tilled while all around was a wilderness. The long-abiding traces of the destruction which was now wrought were its most fearful feature. The accounts of the immediate ravaging are graphic and terrible enough, but they are perhaps outdone in significance by the passionless witness of the great Survey,⁷ the entries of "Waste," "Waste," "Waste," attached through page after page to the Yorkshire lordships which, seventeen years after, had not recovered from the blow. Indeed, we may be inclined to ask whether Northern England ever fully recovered from the blow till that great development of modern times which has reversed the respective importance of the North and the South. For nine years at least no attempt was made at tilling the ground; between York and Durham every town stood uninhabited; their streets became lurking-places for robbers and wild beasts. Even a generation later the passing traveller beheld with sorrow the ruins of famous towns, with their lofty towers rising above the forsaken dwellings, the fields lying untilled and tenantless, the rivers flowing idly through the wilderness. At the time the scene was so fearful that the contemporary writers seem to lack words to

⁷ *Doomsday-book, a survey of all England drawn up by William's orders.*

set forth its full horrors. Men, women, and children died of hunger ; they laid them down and died in the roads and in the fields, and there was no man to bury them. Those who survived kept up life on strange and unaccustomed food. The flesh of cats and dogs was not disdained, and the teaching which put a ban on the flesh of the horse as the food of Christian men⁸ was forgotten under the stress of hunger. Nay, there were those who did not shrink from keeping themselves alive on the flesh of their own kind. Others, in the emphatic words of our old records, bowed their necks for meat in the evil days. They became slaves to any one who would feed them, sometimes, when happier days had come, to be set free by the charity of their masters. Before the end of the year Yorkshire was a wilderness. The bodies of its inhabitants were rotting in the streets, in the highways, or on their own hearthstones ; and those who had escaped from sword, fire, and hunger, had fled out of the land.⁹

X.

LANFRANC.

CHURCH.

[The Norman Conquest of England was very different from any conquest that had gone before it. William not only subdued the land ; he changed the whole face of it. Its old nobles and landowners were for the most part cast out, and their lands given to foreign soldiers who had helped in the Conquest. Thus a foreign baronage was planted on the soil around the foreign king. And as in the State, so

⁸ *The horse was eaten by the Northmen, but as its flesh was offered in sacrifices to their gods, the eating of it was forbidden by the Christian priesthood.* ⁹ *To Scotland.*

William did his work in the Church. Here he had as counsellor, as wise and great as himself, the Lombard Lanfranc, whom he called from the Abbey of Bec to be Archbishop of Canterbury.]

LANFRANC was a Lombard from Pavia.¹ He is said to have been of a noble family, and to have taught and practised law in his native city. He was, at any rate, according to the measure of the time, a scholar, trained in what was known of the Classic Latin literature, in habits of dialectical debate, and especially in those traditions of Roman legal science which yet lingered in the Italian municipalities. For some unknown reason, perhaps in quest of fame and fortune, he left Italy and found his way northwards. It was a fashion among the Lombards. At Avranches in the Côtentin² he had opened a sort of school, teaching the more advanced knowledge of Italy among people who, Norse³ as they were in blood, were rapidly and eagerly welcoming everything Latin, just as the aspiring and the ambitious half-civilization of Russia tried to copy the fuller civilization of Germany and France. After a time, for equally unknown reasons, he left Avranches.

The story which was handed down at Bec in after days, when he had become one of the most famous men of his day, was that he was on his way to Rouen when he was spoiled by robbers and left bound to a tree, in a forest near the Rille. Night came on and he tried to pray; but he could remember nothing—psalm or office. “Lord,” he cried, “I have spent all this time and worn out body and mind in learning; and now when I ought to praise Thee I know not how. Deliver me from this tribulation, and with Thy help I will so correct and frame my life that henceforth

¹ A town in Northern Italy. ² The peninsula which juts out from Normandy on its Breton border. ³ Normandy had been won and settled by Northmen.

I may serve Thee." Next morning, when some passers-by set him free, he asked his way to the humblest monastery in the neighbourhood, and was directed to Bec.⁴ To this place, as to the poorest and humblest of brotherhoods, Lanfranc came. The meeting between him and Herlwin⁵ is thus told. "The abbot happened to be busy building an oven, working at it with his own hands. Lanfranc came up and said, 'God save you!' 'God bless you,' said the abbot; 'are you a Lombard?' 'I am,' said Lanfranc. 'What do you want?' 'I want to become a monk.' Then the abbot bade a monk named Roger, who was doing his own work apart, to show Lanfranc the Book of the Rule,⁶ which he read, and answered that with God's help he would gladly observe it. Then the abbot hearing this, and knowing who he was, and from whence he came, granted him what he desired. And he, falling down at the mouth of the oven, kissed Herlwin's feet."

In welcoming Lanfranc, Herlwin found that he had welcomed a great master and teacher. Lanfranc, under his abbot's urging, began to teach; the monastery grew into a school, and Bec, intended to be but the refuge and training-place of a few narrow and ignorant but earnest devotees, thirsting after God and right amid the savagery of a half tamed heathenism, sprang up, with the rapidity with which changes were made in those days, into a centre of thought and cultivation for Western Christendom. It was the combination more than once seen in modern Europe, where Italian genius and Northern strength have been brought together; where the subtle and rich and cultivated Southern nature has been braced and tempered into purpose and

⁴ *Bec, or Bec-Herlouin, a monastery in mid-Normandy, by the valley of the Rille.* ⁵ *Herlwin was a knight who founded the abbey of Bec, and himself became its first abbot.* ⁶ *The rule of St. Benedict, which all monks were bound to obey.*

energy by contact with the bolder and more strong-willed society of the North. Lanfranc supplied to the rising religious fervour of Normandy just the element which it wanted and which made it fruitful and noble.

The great Norman ruler,⁷ whose mind was so full of great thoughts both in Church and State and whose hand was to be so heavy on those whom he ruled and conquered, soon found him out, and discovered that in Lanfranc he had met a kindred soul and a fit companion in his great enterprise of governing and reducing to order the wild elements of his age. In Lanfranc William had a man who could tell him all that any one of that age could tell him of what was then known of the history, philosophy, and literature of the Church and the world, and of the actual state of questions, tendencies, and parties in the stirring ecclesiastical politics of the day. He could trust Lanfranc's acquaintance with his proper department of knowledge; he could trust his honesty and untiring perseverance; he could trust his good sense and his wise sobriety of mind; he could trust his loyalty the more because he knew that it had bounds, though wide ones. For what seems to have riveted the connection between William and Lanfranc was Lanfranc's perilous boldness in siding at first with the ecclesiastical opposition to William's marriage;⁸ an opposition which probably touched his jealousy as a ruler, and certainly stung him to rage as a husband. When he heard that Lanfranc had condemned it, he ordered not only that the Prior of Bec should be banished from Normandy at once, but that the house should be punished also; that the home farmstead of the abbey, or, as it was called, its "park," should be burned and destroyed.

⁷ *Duke William, afterwards the conqueror of England.*

⁸ *William's marriage with Matilda, a daughter of the Count of Flanders, was long condemned by the Church.*

The savage order was obeyed. Lanfranc set out on a lame horse which went on three legs, for the monks had no better to give him, says his biographer—unable, as so often we find it in these writers, to resist the joke which mixes with their tears and quotations from Scripture. He met the Duke, bitter and dangerous in his wrath; he saluted him, “the lame horse, too, bowing his head to the ground at every step,” as the biographer is careful to add. Lanfranc was sure that if he could only get a chance of explaining himself, his case was not desperate. The Duke first turned away his face; then, “the Divine mercy touching his heart,” he allowed Lanfranc to speak. “Lanfranc began,” says the story, “with a pretty pleasantry,” which betrays, as some other stories do, his astute Lombard humour; “‘I am leaving the country by your orders,’ he said, ‘and I have to go as if on foot, troubled as I am with this useless beast; for I have to look after him so much that I cannot get on a step. So, that I may be able to obey your command, please to give me a better horse.’” This joke took. The Duke replied in the same strain, that he never heard of an offender asking for a present from his displeased judge. So a beginning being made, Lanfranc gained a hearing, and was able to make his position clear. William was too wise a man to throw away lightly an ally like Lanfranc. A complete reconciliation and a closer confidence followed.

XI.

DEATH OF THE CONQUEROR.

PALGRAVE.

[What William did in the State Lanfranc did in the Church, casting out all Englishmen from bishoprics and great abbacies, and putting Normans and Fenchmen in their

stead. But both King and Archbishop did nobler and better work than this. Lanfranc revived religion and learning throughout the land ; while William, though he ruled sternly, kept peace and enforced justice as no English King had been strong enough to do before him. He was drawn however from England in his later days to petty wars in France ; and while fighting on the Norman border found his death, while entering the town of Mantes which he had besieged.]

AN imprudent sally of the inhabitants of Mantes, with the intention of saving their crops, enabled William to enter their town, which was fired by the soldiery. Churches and dwellings alike sank in the flames, many of the inhabitants perished, even the recluses were burned in their cells. William, aged and unwieldy in body, yet impetuous and active in mind, cheered the desolation, and galloped about and about through the burning ruins. His steed stumbled amidst the glowing embers : the royal rider received a fatal injury from his fall. A lingering inflammation ensued, which the skill of his attendants could neither allay nor heal. He called in Gilbert Maminot, Bishop of Lisieux, and Gunthard, Abbot of Jumièges, both well competent to comfort him, if he could be comforted, in body and in mind. The noise, the disturbance, the tainted atmosphere of Rouen, became intolerable to the fevered sufferer, and he was painfully removed to the conventual buildings of St. Gervase, on the adjoining hill. The inward combustion spread so rapidly that no hope of recovery remained, and William knew that there was none.

Firmly contemplating the end, and yet dreading its approach, he sent for Rufus ¹ and Henry, his sons ; and now ensued that conflict of feeling never entirely absent from

¹ *William Rufus, or the Red, was his second son ; Henry his youngest.*

the death-bed, but sometimes so painfully visible, when, as personified in the symbolical paintings of old, we behold the good angel and the evil demon contending for the mastery of the departing soul: the clinging to earthly things with a deep consciousness of their worthlessness, self-condemnation, and self-deceit, repentance, and obduracy, the scales of the balance trembling between heaven and hell. "No tongue can tell," said William, "the deeds of wickedness I have perpetrated in my weary pilgrimage of toil and care." He deplored his birth, born to warfare, polluted by bloodshed from his earliest years, his trials, the base ingratitude he had sustained. He also extolled his own virtues, praised his own conscientious appointments in the Church: expatiated upon his good deeds, his alms, and the monasteries and nunneries which under his reign had been founded by his munificence.

But Rufus and Henry were standing by that bed-side, and who was to be the Conqueror's heir? How were his dominions to be divided? William must speak of his earthly authority; but every word relating to the object of his pride was uttered in agony. Robert, as first-born, was to take Normandy: it was granted to him before William met Harold in the field of the valley of blood. "Wretched," declared the King, "will be the country subjected to his rule; but he has received the homage of the barons, and the concession, once made, cannot be withdrawn. Of England, I will appoint no heir: let Him in whose hands are all things, provide according to His will."

A night of somewhat diminished suffering ensued, when the troubled and expiring body takes a dull, painful, un-restful rest before its last earthly repose. But as the cheerful, life-giving rays of the rising sun were darting above the horizon, across the sad apartment, and shedding brightness on its walls, William was half awakened from his imperfect

slumbers by the measured, mellow, reverberating swelling tone of the great cathedral bell. "It is the hour of prime," replied the attendants in answer to his inquiry. Then were the priesthood welcoming with voices of thanksgiving the renewed gift of another day, and sending forth the choral prayer, that the hours might flow in holiness till blessed at their close. But his time of labour and struggle, sin and repentance, was past. William lifted up his hands in prayer and expired. As was very common in those times, the death of the great and rich was the signal for a scene of disgraceful neglect and confusion. The King's sons had already departed; all who remained of higher degree rushed out to horse, each hastening to his home, for the purpose of protecting his property against the dreaded confusion of an interregnum, or preparing to augment it. Those of meaner rank, the servants and ribalds of the court, stripped the corpse, even of its last garments, plundered every article within reach, and then, all quitting him, left William's body lying naked on the floor.

Consternation and apathy were, after some hours, diminished. The clergy recollected their duty, and offered up the prayers of the Church; and the Archbishop directed that the body should be conveyed to Caen. But there was no one to take charge of the obsequies, not one of those who were connected with William by consanguinity, or bound to him by blood or by gratitude; and the duty was performed by the care and charity of Herlouin, a knight of humble fortune, who himself defrayed the expenses, grieved at the indignity to which the mortal spoil of the Sovereign was exposed, and who, as the only mourner, attended the coffin during its conveyance to Caen. At the gates of Caen, clergy and laity came forth to receive the body, but at that very time flames arose, the streets were filled with heavy smoke: a fire had broken out which destroyed good part

of the city: the procession was dispersed, and the monks alone remained. They brought the body to St. Stephen's monastery, and took order for the royal sepulture.

The grave was dug deep in the presbytery, between altar and choir. All the bishops and abbots of Normandy assembled. After mass had been sung, Gilbert, Bishop of Evreux, addressed the people: and when he had magnified the fame of the departed, he asked them all to join in prayer for the sinful soul; and that each would pardon any injury he might have received from the monarch. A loud voice was now heard from the crowd. A poor man stood up before the bier, Asceline, the son of Arthur, who forbade that William's corpse should be received into the ground he had usurped by reckless violence. The Bishop forthwith instituted an inquiry into the charge. They called up witnesses, and the fact having been ascertained, they treated with Asceline and paid the debt, the price of that narrow little plot of earth, the last bed of the Conqueror. Asceline withdrew his ban; but as the swollen corpse sank into the grave, it burst, filling the sacred edifice with corruption. The obsequies were hurried through, and thus was William the Conqueror gathered to his fathers, with loathing, disgust, and horror.

XII.

ANSELM'S ELECTION.

CHURCH.

[As William had feared, the reign of his son, the Red King, proved a curse to England. The nobles indeed were held firmly down, and peace was enforced. But the land was vexed with heavy taxes and sore oppression;

while the Church suffered from the King's extortion, its bishoprics and greater abbasies being left vacant that their revenues might go to the King's treasury. But so stern was the King that none dared withstand him, till a sore sickness brought him for a while to repent. He consented to fill the see of Canterbury, which had been left vacant since Lanfranc's death, and named to it the good Abbot of Bec, Anselm.]

ANSELM was born about 1033 at Aosta,¹ or in its neighbourhood. The scenery of his birthplace, "wild Aosta, lulled by the Alpine rills," is familiar to the crowds who are yearly attracted to its neighbourhood by the love of Alpine grandeur and the interest of Alpine adventure, and who pass through it on their way to and from the peaks and valleys of the wonderful region round it.² The district itself is a mountain land, but one with the richness and warmth of the South, as it descends towards the level of the river, the Dora Baltea, which carries the glacier torrents from the mountains round Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn to the plains where they meet the Po. Great ridges masking the huge masses of the high Alps behind them, flank its long valley as it runs straight from east to west. Closely overhanging the city on the south rises rapidly a wall of sub-alpine mountain, for great part of the day in shadow, torn by ravines, with woods and pastures hanging on its steep flanks, and with white houses gleaming among them, but towering up at last into the dark precipices of the Becca di Nona and the peak of Mont Emilius. At the upper end of the valley, towards the west, seen over a vista of walnuts, chestnuts, and vines, appear high up in the sky, resting as it were on the breast of the great hills, the white glaciers of the Ruitor, bright in sunshine, or veiled by storms; and

¹ *In the north of Piedmont.*
north of Aosta.

² *Switzerland lies to the*

from the bridge over the torrent which rushes by the city from the north, the eye goes up to the everlasting snows of the "domed Velan" and the majestic broken Pikes of the Grand Combin.

The only trace of the influence on Anselm of the scenery in the midst of which he grew up is found in the story of a boyish dream which made an impression on him, as it is one of the few details about his life at Aosta which, doubtless from his own mouth, Eadmer³ has preserved. The story is not without a kind of natural grace, and fits in like a playful yet significant overture to the history of his life. "Anselm," it says, "when he was a little child, used gladly to listen, as far as his age allowed, to his mother's conversation; and having heard from her that there is one God in heaven above, ruling all things and containing all things, he imagined, like a boy bred up among the mountains, that heaven rested on the mountains, that the palace of God was there, and that the way to it was up the mountains. His thoughts ran much upon this; and it came to pass on a certain night that he dreamed that he ought to go up to the top of the mountain, and hasten to the palace of God, the Great King. But before he began to ascend he saw in the plain which reached to the foot of the mountain women reaping the corn, who were the King's maidens; but they did their work very carelessly and slothfully. The boy grieved at their sloth, and rebuking it, settled in his mind to accuse them before the Lord the King. So having pressed on to the top of the mountain, he came into the palace of the King. There he found the Lord with only his chief butler: for, as it seemed to him, all the household had been sent to gather the harvest; for it was autumn. So he went in and the Lord called him; and he drew near and sat at his feet. Then the Lord asked him with

³ *His biographer.*

gracious kindness who he was and whence he came, and what he wanted. He answered according to the truth. Then the Lord commanded, and bread of the whitest was brought to him by the chief butler; and he ate and was refreshed before the Lord. Therefore in the morning, when he recalled what he had seen before the eyes of his mind, he believed, like a simple and innocent child, that he really had been in heaven, and had been refreshed by the bread of the Lord; and so he declared publicly before others."

Anselm's biographer, perhaps he himself in after life, saw the hand of providence in his father's harshness to him, which no submission could soften, and which at last drove him in despair to leave his home, and, after the fashion of his countrymen, to seek his fortune in strange lands. Italians, especially Lombards,⁴ meet us continually in the records and letters of this time as wanderers, adventurers, monks in Normandy and even England. He crossed Mont Cenis with a single clerk for his attendant, and he did not forget the risk and fatigue of the passage. Then following perhaps the track of another Italian, Lanfranc of Pavia, he came to Normandy, and remained for a time at Avranches, where Lanfranc had once taught. Finally he followed Lanfranc, now a famous master, to the monastery where he had become prior, the newly-founded monastery of Bec.

[At Bec Anselm rose from being monk to the posts of prior and abbot, gathering as years went by a fame for learning and for holiness yet greater than that of his predecessor Lanfranc. It was on a visit to England at the time when the Red King lay sick almost to death that William named him to the See of Canterbury.]

When the King's choice was announced to Anselm, he trembled and turned pale. The bishops came to bring

⁴ *People of north Italy.*

him to the King, to receive the investiture of the archbishopric in the customary way, by the delivery of a pastoral staff. Anselm absolutely refused to go. Then the bishops took him aside from the bystanders, and expostulated with him. "What did he mean? How could he strive against God? He saw Christianity almost destroyed in England, all kinds of wickedness rampant, the churches of God nigh dead by this man's tyranny; and when he could help, he scorned to do so." "It is no use," he said; "what you propose shall not be." At last they dragged him by main force to the sick King's room: William, in his anguish and fear, was deeply anxious about the matter, and entreated him with tears, by the memory of his father and mother, who had been Anselm's friends, to deliver their son from the deadly peril in which he stood. The sick man's distress moved some of the bystanders, and they turned with angry remonstrances on Anselm. "What senseless folly this was! The King could not bear this agitation. Anselm was embittering his dying hours; and on him would rest the responsibility of all the mischiefs that would follow, if he would not do his part by accepting the pastoral charge."

Anselm in his trouble appealed for encouragement to two of his monks, Baldwin and Eustace, who were with him. "Ah, my brethren, why do not you help me?" "Might it have been the will of God," he used to say, speaking of those moments, "I would, if I had the choice, gladly have died, rather than been raised to the archbishopric." Baldwin could only speak of submitting to the will of God; and burst, says Eadmer, into a passion of tears, blood gushing from his nostrils. "Alas! your staff is soon broken," said Anselm. Then the king bade them all fall at Anselm's feet to implore his assent; he, in his turn, fell down before them, still

holding to his refusal. Finally, they lost patience ; they were angry with him, and with themselves for their own irresolution. The cry arose, "A pastoral staff! a pastoral staff!" They dragged him to the King's bed-side, and held out his right arm to receive the staff. But when the King presented it, Anselm kept his hand firmly clenched and would not take it. They tried by main force to wrench it open ; and when he cried out with the pain of their violence, they at last held the staff closely pressed against his still closed hand. Amid the shouts of the crowd, "*Long live the Bishop!*" with the *Te Deum* of the bishops and clergy, "he was carried, rather than led, to a neighbouring church, still crying out, It is nought that ye are doing, it is nought that ye are doing." He himself describes the scene in a letter to his monks at Bec. "It would have been difficult to make out whether madmen were dragging along one in his senses, or sane men a madman, save that they were chanting, and I, pale with amazement and pain, looked more like one dead than alive."

XIII.

DEATH OF THE RED KING.

PALGRAVE.

[Reluctant as Anselm was to be made Archbishop, when once installed in his see he resolutely withstood the king. Rufus recovered from his illness only to fall back into his old oppression and greed ; but though all others bent to him, he could not bend Anselm. His steady rebukes at last goaded William to drive him from England ; and from that day the King's ill rule went on without a check. At last Rufus was found slain by an arrow in the New Forest, whether by chance or of set purpose was never known.]

ON the first day of August, the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula, Lammas Day, Rufus assembled a large and jovial party in the leafy lodge of the Lindwood, the Dragon's-Wood, the most pleasant of his bowers.—His brother Henry, William de Breteuil, Gilbert de Aquila, Gilbert Fitz-Richard, Robert Fitz-Hamo, Ralph de Aix, or de Aquis, and Walter Tyrrell: together with a vast *meisney*¹ of the Court-followers, Prickers, Verdurers, Ribalds.—Rufus never moved unless encircled by the vilest ruffianage.

Rufus was exuberant in his conversation, boisterous: he addressed his conversation to Tyrrell in particular, roughly and merrily—insult mingled with whim and familiarity. The Chastellain of Poix² was excited up to the same tone, and flouted Rufus in return. He joked to tease the King, mocked him, telling him that whilst all was open and the way clear, Breton and Angevine at his commands, he did nothing, in spite of all his great words and talk. Rufus became more coarse and rude, and, unmindful of any national pride which Tyrrell might feel, boasted how he would lead his army beyond the Alps, and hold his Court at Poitiers next Christmas.³ Tyrrell laughed at such a vaunt. “To the Alps, and back again within so short a time?—but if ever they submit to the English,” continued Tyrrell, “an evil death may Frenchman and Burgundian die!” The dialogue began in jest, but ended in anger. The ranting words thus passing were marked, repeated, perhaps exaggerated.—It should seem that few, if any, of the party could be said to have been in a state of sobriety.

Night closed in, the darkness brought a sudden sadness upon the King's heart: when alone, how troubled, how

¹ *Company.* ² *Walter Tyrrell was a French noble who held the castle of Poix.* ³ *Rufus had won Normandy from his brother, and conquered Maine. He hoped to become master of all Southern France, and perhaps to make his way over the Alps.*

unhappy was Rufus. In the still of the night, the last night-season in which he laid himself down to sleep, but not in peace, the attendants were startled by the King's voice;—a bitter cry—a cry for help—a cry for deliverance—he had been suddenly awakened by a dreadful dream, as of exquisite anguish befalling him in a ruined Church at the foot of the Malwood rampart.—No more would he be left alone: the extinguished lamps were lighted in the chamber, where Rufus impatiently awaited the early morn.

Dawn broke on Thursday the second of August, the morrow of St. Peter ad Vincula: Robert Fitz-Hamo entered, hastily, anxious, bearing tidings of a warning given through the dream of a holy Monk beyond the sea, speaking clearly of great and threatening danger: he therefore earnestly supplicated the King not to hunt for that one day. Rufus burst out into a horse-laugh—"He is a Monk; monks dream for money: money let him have—an hundred shillings, his fitting guerdon." Rufus showed no signs of fear, yet a secret misgiving, unconfessed even to himself, weighed upon his soul. Many of the party agreed with Fitz-Hamo, and thought caution might be advisable. Rufus lingered and paused. It was their custom to hunt in the morning-tide, but Rufus postponed the sport till the afternoon, and the mid-day banquet was served before him. He indulged even more than usual in food and wine: the debauch was prolonged till the decline of day, when Rufus rose, reeking from the table, and, surrounded by his joyous companions, prepared to start. An Armourer presented the King with six newly-headed shafts for the deadly arbalest.⁴ Rufus took them, tried them, and selecting the two keenest, gave them (as the confused report afterwards prevailed) to Tyrrell, telling the Chastellain of Poix (according to one of the versions which became current) that it was he

⁴ *Crossbow.*

who deserved the arrow—let that bowman bear the prize who can best deal the mortal wound: and others also recounted that he afterwards cried out to Tyrrell, *Shoot, Devil*, or, *Shoot in the Devil's name*.

Still more delay. Rufus continued in vehement and idle talk: the evening was coming on, when Serlo's messenger appeared.⁵ More cause of laughter for Rufus, mixed with a nettled feeling of impatient anger:—"It is strange," said he,—“that my Lord Serlo, the wise and discreet, should tease me, tired and harassed as I am with business, by transmitting to me such stories and silly dreams. Does he think I am an Englishman who will put off a journey for an old wife's fancy, a token or a sign?”—He rose hastily: the saddled steed was brought. Rufus, placing his foot in the great stirrup, vaulted on his courser: the Hunters now dispersed, Henry in one direction, William de Breteuil in another, Rufus in a third, dashing on towards the depths of the Forest, through the chequered gleams of transparent green, the lengthened lines of cheerful shade, the huge stems shining in the golden light of the setting sun.

No man ever owned that he had spoken afterwards to Rufus—no man owned to having again heard the voice of Rufus, except in the inarticulate agonies of death. Separated unaccountably from his suite and companions, Robert Fitz-Hamo and Gilbert de Aquila found him expiring—stretched on the ground, within the walls of the ruined Church, just below the Malwood Castle, transpierced by the shaft of a Norman arbalest, the blood gurgling in his throat.

It is said they tried to pray with him, but in vain. Forthwith ensued a general dispersion—Hunters and Huntsmen,

⁵ *The Abbot Serlo had dreamed of the King's death, and sent to warn him.*

Earl and Churl, scattering in every direction. It seemed as if the intelligence sounded out of the ground throughout the Forest. At the same time a consentaneous outcry arose, no one can tell how it began, that Walter Tyrrell had slain the King. All the ruffian soldiery, the ribalds, the villainous and polluted Court-retainers, who surrounded Rufus, vowing vengeance against the Traitor, began a hot pursuit : but while they were chafing and scurrying after Tyrrell, many would have protected him ; either believing in his innocence, or rejoicing in the deed. Tyrrell fled as for his life, and crossing the river, at the ford which bears his name, he baffled his pursuers. A yearly rent, payable into the Exchequer by the Lord of the Manor through which the water flows, is traditionally supposed to have been the fine imposed for the negligence in permitting the escape of the accused Murderer. Be this as it may, Tyrrell received no further impediment, and passing over to France, he settled in his Seignury of Poix, where he lived long, honoured and respected ; but though holding (as it is supposed) lands in Essex, and connected by marriage with the Giffords, he never returned again to England.

XIV.

THE BLENDING OF CONQUERORS AND CONQUERED.

GREEN.

On the Red King's death the English throne was seized by his younger brother, Henry the First. With him the disorder and oppression under which England had suffered, came to an end. His rule was as stern as that of his father, but it was just and orderly, and secured peace

and justice for the people through a reign of thirty years. In this long period of rest the Normans and Englishmen drew quietly and unconsciously together into one people, and all distinction of conquerors and conquered was lost. Henry himself led the way in this fusion of the two races by his marriage with Matilda, a daughter of the Scottish King by his English wife, and thus a representative of the old English royal blood.]

ON his accession Henry promised to restore the law of Eadward the Confessor, in other words, the old constitution of the realm, with the changes which his father¹ had introduced. His marriage gave a significance to these promises which the meanest English peasant could understand. Edith, or Matilda, was the daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland and of Margaret, the sister of Eadgar Ætheling. She had been brought up in the nunnery of Romsey by its abbess, her aunt Christina, and the veil² which she had taken there formed an obstacle to her union with the King, which was only removed by the wisdom of Anslem. The Archbishop's recall had been one of Henry's first acts after his accession, and Matilda appeared before his court to tell her tale in words of passionate earnestness. She had been veiled in her childhood, she asserted, only to save her from the insults of the rude soldiery who infested the land,³ had flung the veil from her again and again, and had yielded at last to the unwomanly taunts, the actual blows of her aunt. "As often as I stood in her presence," the girl pleaded passionately to the saintly Primate, "I wore the veil, trembling as I wore it with indignation and grief. But as soon as I could get out of her sight I used to snatch it from my head, fling it on the ground, and trample it under foot.

¹ *William the Conqueror.* ² *Taking the veil was the ceremony by which a woman became a nun.* ³ *At the time of the Conquest and during the reign of Rufus.*

That was the way, and none other, in which I was veiled." Anslem at once declared her free from conventual bonds, and the shout of the English multitude when he set the crown on Matilda's brow drowned the murmur of Churchman or of baron. The taunts of the Norman nobles, who nicknamed the King and his spouse in irony Godric and Godfigu, were lost in the joy of the people at large. For the first time since the Conquest an English sovereign sat on the English throne. The blood of Cerdic⁴ and Ælfred was to blend itself with that of Rolf⁵ and the Conqueror. It was impossible that the two peoples should henceforth be severed from one another, and their fusion proceeded so rapidly that the name of Norman had passed away at the accession of Henry the Second, and the descendants of the victors at Senlac⁶ boasted themselves to be Englishmen.

We can dimly trace the progress of this blending of the two races together in the case of the burgher population in the towns.

One immediate result of the Conquest had been a great immigration into England from the Continent. A peaceful invasion of the industrial and trading classes of Normandy followed quick on the conquest of the Norman soldiery. Every Norman noble as he quartered himself upon English lands, every Norman abbot as he entered his English cloister, gathered French artists or French domestics around his new castle or his new church. Around the Abbey of Battle, for instance, which William⁷ had founded on the site of his great victory, "Gilbert the Foreigner, Gilbert the Weaver, Benet the Steward, Hugh the Secretary, Baldwin the Tailor," mixed with the English tenantry. More especially was this

⁴ *The conqueror of Wessex and head of the lines of West-Saxon kings.*
⁵ *The conqueror of Normandy and ancestor of its dukes.*
⁶ *Or the battle of Hastings.*
⁷ *The Conqueror.*

the case with the capital. Long before the landing of William the Normans had had mercantile establishments in London. Their settlement would naturally have remained a mere trading colony, but London had no sooner submitted to the Conqueror than "many of the citizens of Rouen and Caen⁵ passed over thither, preferring to be dwellers in this city, inasmuch as it was fitter for their trading, and better stored with the merchandise in which they were wont to traffic." At Norwich and elsewhere the French colony isolated itself in a separate French town, side by side with the English borough. In London it seems to have taken at once the position of a governing class. The name of Gilbert Beket, the father of the famous Archbishop, is one of the few that remain to us of the Portreeves⁶ of London, the predecessors of its mayors; he held in Stephen's time a large property in houses within the walls, and a proof of his civic importance was preserved in the annual visit of each newly-elected chief magistrate to his tomb in the little chapel which he had founded in the churchyard of St. Paul's. Yet Gilbert was one of the Norman strangers who followed in the wake of the Conqueror; he was by birth a burgher of Rouen, as his wife was of a burgher family from Caen.

It was partly to this infusion of foreign blood, partly no doubt to the long internal peace and order secured by the Norman rule, that the English towns owed the wealth and importance to which they attained during the reign of Henry the First. In the silent growth and elevation of the English people the boroughs led the way: unnoticed and despised by prelate and noble, they had alone preserved the full tradition of Teutonic liberty. The rights of self-government,

⁵ *The chief towns of Normandy.* ⁶ *Port-reeve, the reeve or royal officer over a "port" or town; as sheriff or shire-reeve is the royal officer over a county or shire.*

of free speech in free meeting, of equal justice by one's equals, were brought safely across the ages of Norman tyranny by the traders and shopkeepers of the towns. In the quiet, quaintly-named streets, in town-mead and market-place, in the lord's mill⁷ beside the stream, in the bell which swung out its summons to the crowded borough-mote,⁸ in the jealousies of craftsmen and gilds,⁹ lay the real life of Englishmen, the life of their home and trade, their ceaseless, sober struggle with oppression, their steady, unwearied battle for self-government. It is difficult to trace the steps by which borough after borough won its freedom. The bulk of them were situated in the royal demesne,¹⁰ and, like other tenants, their customary rents were collected and justice administered by a royal officer. Amongst such towns London stood chief, and the charter which Henry granted it became the model for the rest. The King yielded the citizens the right of justice; every townsman could claim to be tried by his fellow-townsmen in the town-courts or hustings, whose sessions took place every week. They were subject only to the old English trial by oath, and exempt from the trial by battle, which the Normans had introduced. Their trade was protected from toll or exaction over the length and breadth of the land.

The King however still nominated, in London and elsewhere, the Portreeve, or magistrate of the town, nor were the citizens as yet united together in a commune or corporation; but an imperfect civic organization existed in the "wards" or quarters of the town, each governed by its own alderman, and in the "gilds" or voluntary associations of merchants or traders which ensured order and mutual pro-

⁷ Men were forced to carry their wheat to be ground at their lord's mill.

⁸ Meeting of the townsmen for self-government.

⁹ Trade companies.

¹⁰ Land where no noble but the king was lord.

tection for their members. Loose too as these bonds may seem, they were drawn firmly together by the older English traditions of freedom which the towns preserved. In London, for instance, the burgesses gathered in town-mote when the bell swung out from St. Paul's to deliberate freely on their own affairs under the presidency of their aldermen. Here too they mustered in arms, if dangers threatened the city, and delivered the city-banner to their captain, the Norman baron Fitz-Walter, to lead them against the enemy. Few boroughs had as yet attained to power such as this, but charter after charter during Henry's reign raised the townsmen of boroughs from mere traders, wholly at the mercy of their lord, into customary tenants,¹¹ who had purchased their freedom by a fixed rent, regulated their own trade, and enjoyed exemption from all but their own justice.

The advance of towns which had grown up not on the royal demesne, but around abbey or castle, was slower and more difficult. The story of Bury St. Edmund's shows how gradual was the transition from pure serfage to an imperfect freedom. Much that was plough-land there in the time of the Confessor was covered with houses under the Norman rule. The building of the great abbey-church drew its craftsmen and masons to mingle with the ploughmen and reapers of the abbot's demesne. The troubles of the time helped here as elsewhere the progress of the town; serfs, fugitives from justice or their lord, the trader, the Jew, naturally sought shelter under the strong hand of St. Edmund. But the settlers were wholly at the abbot's mercy. Not a settler but was bound to pay his pence to the abbot's treasury, to plough a rood of his land, to reap in his harvest field, to fold his sheep in the abbey folds, to help to bring the

¹¹ *Tenants secure of their holding so long as they paid the customary services in labour or dues in money.*

annual catch of eels from the abbey waters. Within the four crosses that bounded the abbot's domain, land and water were his; the cattle of the townsmen paid for their pasture on the common; if the fullers refused the loan of their cloth, the cellarer¹² would refuse the use of the stream, and seize their looms wherever he found them. No toll might be levied from tenants of the abbey farms, and customers had to wait before shop and stall till the buyers of the abbot had had the pick of the market. There was little chance of redress, for if burghers complained in the folk-mote, it was before the abbot's officers that its meeting was held; if they appealed to the alderman, he was the abbot's nominee, and received the horn, the symbol of his office, at the abbot's hands. Like all the greater revolutions of society, the advance from this mere serfage was a silent one; indeed its more galling instances of oppression seem to have slipped unconsciously away. Some, like the eel-fishing, were commuted for an easy rent; others, like the slavery of the fullers and the toll of flax, simply disappeared. By usage, by omission, by downright forgetfulness, here by a little struggle, there by a present to a needy abbot, the town won freedom.

The moral revolution which events like this indicate was backed by a religious revival which forms a marked feature in the reign of Henry the First. Pious, learned, and energetic as the bishops of William's¹³ appointment had been, they were not Englishmen. Till Beket's time no Englishman occupied the throne of Canterbury; till Jocelyn, in the reign of John, no Englishman occupied the see of Wells. In language, in manner, in sympathy, the higher clergy were thus completely severed from the lower priesthood and the people, and the whole influence of the Church, constitutional

¹² *The officer of the abbey who dealt with its tenants.*

¹³ *The Conqueror's.*

as well as religious, was for the moment paralyzed. Lanfranc indeed exercised a great personal influence over William ; but Anselm stood alone against Rufus, and no other voice of ecclesiastical freedom broke the silence of the reign of Henry the First. But at the close of the latter reign and throughout that of Stephen,¹⁴ the people, left thus without shepherds, was stirred by the first of those great religious movements which England was to experience afterwards in the preaching of the Friars, the Lollardism of Wyclif, the Reformation, the Puritan enthusiasm, and the mission-work of the Wesleys. Everywhere in town and country men banded themselves together for prayer, hermits flocked to the woods, noble and churl¹⁵ welcomed the austere Cistercians, a reformed outshoot of the Benedictine order, as they spread over the moors and forests of the North. A new spirit of devotion woke the slumber of the religious houses, and penetrated alike to the home of the noble Walter d'Espece at Rievaulx, or of the trader Gilbert Beket in Cheapside.

London took its full share in the great revival. The city was proud of its religion, its thirteen conventual and more than a hundred parochial churches. The new impulse changed, in fact, its very aspect. In the midst of the city Bishop Richard busied himself with the vast cathedral¹⁶ which Bishop Maurice had begun ; barges came up the river with stone from Caen for the great arches that moved the popular wonder, while street and lane were being levelled to make space for the famous churchyard of St. Paul's. Rahere, the King's minstrel, raised the priory of St. Bartholomew beside Smithfield, Alfune built St. Giles's at Cripplegate. The old English Cnihtena-gild surrendered

¹⁴ *Stephen succeeded Henry the First.*

¹⁵ *Labourer.*

¹⁶ *Of St. Paul.*

their soke¹⁷ of Aldgate as a site for the new priory of the Holy Trinity. The tale of this house paints admirably the temper of the citizens at this time. Its founder, Prior Norman, had built church and cloister and bought books and vestments in so liberal a fashion that at last no money remained to buy bread. The canons were at their last gasp when many of the city folk, looking into the refectory as they paced round the cloisters in their usual Sunday procession, saw the tables laid, but not a single loaf on them. "Here is a fine set-out," cried the citizens, "but where is the bread to come from?" The women present vowed to bring a loaf every Sunday, and there was soon bread enough and to spare for the priory and its guests. We see the strength of the new movement in the new class of ecclesiastics that it forces on the stage; men like Anslem or John of Salisbury, or the two great prelates who followed one another after Henry's death in the See of Canterbury, Theobald and Thomas, derived whatever might they possessed from sheer holiness of life or unselfishness of aim. The revival left its stamp on the fabric of the constitution itself; the paralysis of the Church ceased as the new impulse bound the prelacy and people together, and its action, when at the end of Henry's reign it started into a power strong enough to save England from anarchy, has been felt in our history ever since.

¹⁷ *A piece of ground held on terms of military service.*

XV.

BATTLE OF THE STANDARD.

THIERRY.

[The progress of the country was broken by the death of Henry the First, and by the long strife for the crown which followed it between his nephew Stephen and his daughter Matilda. But even in the midst of the anarchy which this strife brought about, the union of Norman and Englishmen into a single and united people was seen in the gathering of all the men of Yorkshire and the North to withstand an invasion of the Scots. David, King of Scotland, was Matilda's uncle; and under pretext of supporting her cause he strove to take advantage of the weakness of England and to seize all north of the Humber for his own. With this end he crossed the border; and cruelly ravaging as he went, at last entered Yorkshire. Here however he was met and routed in the Battle of the Standard.]

IN order to rouse their subjects to march with them against the Scottish King,¹ the Norman barons of the North skilfully took advantage of the older superstitions of the country's side. They invoked the aid of those English saints whom in the early days of the Conquest they had treated with contempt, and took them, so to say, for the leaders of their army. Archbishop Thurstan² raised the banners of St. Cuthbert of Durham, of St. John of Beverley, and of St. Wilfrid of Ripon. The Standards of these popular saints were drawn from their churches and carried to North-Allerton, some thirty-two miles to the north of York, a spot where the Norman chiefs, William Peperel and Walter Espec, had decided to await the enemy's

¹ *David.*² *The Archbishop of York.*

attack. The Archbishop, who was kept by sickness from the field, sent in his place the Bishop of Durham, who had probably been driven from his church by the Scotch invasion. An instinct, partly of religion, partly of patriotism, gathered the English inhabitants of the neighbouring towns and country round these English banners, raised though they were on the field of Allerton by lords of a foreign race. The Englishmen no longer bore the battle-axe, which had been the favourite arm of their forefathers: they were armed with huge bows and long arrows. The change in their equipment³ had been wrought by the Conquest in two different ways; in the first place, those of the English who had been forced to serve the Norman Kings in their wars for bread and pay had been compelled to train themselves in the Norman mode of fighting, while those who, preferring a struggle for independence, had become bandits on the roads or outlaws in the forest had equally been obliged to exchange weapons which were only fitted for hand-to-hand combat for arms more capable of reaching from afar the Norman knight or a king's deer. As the children both of one and of the other had been from their boyhood trained in the use of the bow, England had in less than a century become a country of good archers, as Scotland was a country of good spearmen.

While the Scotch army crossed the Tees, the Norman barons were actively preparing to receive its attack. On a platform supported by four wheels they raised a ship's mast, on whose top was placed a small silver pyx, which contained the consecrated host, while from the mast hung

³ *The bow was originally a purely Norman weapon, and to it William the Conqueror owed his victory at Hastings. The old English weapons were the sword and lance; the Danes introduced their broad axe into the English equipment; with the Normans came the bow.*

those banners of the saints which were intended to rouse the Englishmen to fight hard. This Standard, one of a kind very common in the middle ages, occupied the centre of the line of battle. The Anglo-Norman knighthood took prest about it after having been leagued by a solemn oath in which they swore to hold together for the defence of the land, whether in life or in death. The Saxon archers formed the wings and advanced guard of the army.

The Scottish host, whose Standard was nothing but a banner borne upon a spear, marched to the field in several distinct bodies. Their King's young son, Henry, commanded the men of the Lowlands and the Englishmen of Cumberland and of Northumberland;⁴ the Scotch King himself was at the head of the Highland clans and of the men of the Western Isles; while knights of Norman birth, armed from head to foot, formed his body-guard.⁵ One of these, named Robert the Bruce, an old man, who, though he held his fief in Annandale from the Scottish King, had no personal motive of enmity against his fellow-barons in England, drew near to David at the moment when he was going to give the signal for attack, and said to him, with a look of sorrow, "Have you thought well, Sir King, against whom you are going to fight? It is against Normans and Englishmen, the men who have always served you so well, whether in arms or at the council-board, and who have succeeded in making your own peoples obey you. Do you

⁴ *Cumberland was held by the Scotch King as a fief, or grant, on terms of military tenure, from the English sovereign. Northumberland he had overrun, and pressed its men into his host.*

⁵ *Under David, many Norman nobles had been drawn to the Scottish court, and had received grants of land on condition of serving the Scottish king in war. Englishmen also had received like grants on like terms; and it was on the aid of this knighthood that David depended for support against the native Highlanders and Galloway men, whom it was hard to hold in obedience.*

hold yourself so sure, then, of the submission of those clans, or hope you to hold them to their duty with no other support than your Scotch men-of-arms? But remember that it was we Normans who first put them in your power, and that it is from this that the hate springs which nerves them to attack our fellow Normans."

The words of Bruce seemed to make a great impression on the King, but his nephew, William, cried with impatience, "Those are a traitor's words!" and the old baron met the affront by renouncing, in the usual terms, his oath of fealty and homage to David, and by spurring at once into the camp of his enemies. Then the Highlanders who surrounded the Scottish King shouted aloud the old name of their country, "Alban! Alban!" The shout was the signal for the combat. The men of Cumberland, of Liddesdale, and of Teviotdale⁶ made a strong and quick onset on the centre of the Norman line, and, as an old chronicler tells us, broke it like a spider's web; but they were ill-supported by the other Scotch troops, and failed to make their way to the Standard. Round this the Anglo-Normans re-formed their ranks, and drove back their assailants with heavy loss. The first charge was followed by a second one, in which the long lances of the men from the south-west of Scotland⁷ broke fruitlessly against the iron mail and the shields of the Norman knighthood. Then the Highlanders drew in their two-handed swords, rushed forward for a hand-to-hand engagement; but the English archers wheeling on their flanks riddled them with a flight of arrows, while the Norman horsemen, in serried line and with lances at rest, charged their front. Valiant as they were, the clansmen were ill fitted for a regular engagement, and from the moment that

⁶ *Liddesdale on the western border of Scotland; Teviotdale on the eastern.*

⁷ *The men of Galloway.*

they felt themselves unable to pierce the ranks of the enemy, they broke in disorder. The whole of the Scotch army was now forced to give way, and fell back as far as the Tyne.

XVI.

THOMAS THE CHANCELLOR.

MISS YONGE.

[After twenty years of terrible suffering, the death of Stephen brought peace to the realm. Matilda had long since withdrawn from the strife, and waived her claim in favour of her son Henry. Henry had already inherited the French counties of Anjou and Maine from his father, Geoffry Plantagenet; he married Eleanor, the Duchess of Aquitaine, and thus became virtually master of nearly all Southern France; he was Duke of Normandy in right of his mother, and his accession to the throne of England on Stephen's death made him one of the greatest sovereigns in the world of his day. But great as was his power, his ability was yet greater. He had no sooner become king than he put an end to the disorder which had so long reigned in England; subduing the barons, driving out the foreign soldiery, forcing all to keep good peace, and carrying justice through all the realm. In this work he was aided by the genius of his Chancellor, Thomas Becket, the son of a London trader of Norman blood, but whose ability raised him to the highest posts in Church and State.]

THOMAS received a clerkly education from the canons of Merton,¹ and showed such rare ability that his family deemed him destined for great things. He was very tall and handsome, with aquiline nose, quick eyes, and long slender,

¹ *A religious house in Surrey.*

beautiful hands ; and he was very vigorous and athletic, delighting in the manly sports of the young men of his time. In his boyhood, while he was out hawking with a knight who used to lodge in his father's house when he came to London, he was exposed to a serious danger. They came to a narrow bridge, fit only for foot-passengers, with a mill-wheel just below. The knight nevertheless rode across the bridge, and Thomas was following when his horse, making a false step, fell into the river. The boy could swim, but would not make for the bank without rescuing the hawk that had shared his fall, and thus was drawn by the current under the wheel, and in another moment would have been torn to pieces, had not the miller stopped the machinery and pulled him out of the water more dead than alive.

It seems that it was the practice for wealthy merchants to lodge their customers when brought to London by business, and thus young Thomas became known to several persons of high estimation in their several stations. A rich merchant called Osborn gave him his accounts to keep ; knights noticed his riding, and dukes his learning and religious life. Some of the clergy of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who were among these guests, were desirous of presenting Thomas to their master. He at first held back, but they at length prevailed with him : he became a member of the Archbishop's household, and after he had improved himself in learning, was ordained deacon, and presented with the Archdeaconry of Canterbury, an office which was then by no means similar to what we at present call by that name. It really then meant being chief of the deacons, and involved the being counsellor and, in a manner, treasurer to the bishop of the diocese ; and thus to be Archdeacon of Canterbury was the highest ecclesiastical dignity in the kingdom next to that of the prelates and great mitred abbots.

Thomas Becket was a secular clerk, bound by none of the vows of monastic orders, and therefore though he led a strictly pure and self-denying life, he did not consider himself obliged to abstain from worldly business or amusements, and in the year 1155 he was appointed Chancellor by Henry II. He was then in his thirty-eighth year, of great ability and cultivation, graceful in demeanour, ready of speech, clear in mind, and his tall frame (reported to have been no less than six feet two in height) fitting him for martial exercise and bodily exertion. The King, a youth of little past twenty, delighting in ability wherever he found it, became much attached to his gallant Chancellor, and not only sought his advice in the regulation of England after its long troubles, but when business was done they used to play together like two schoolboys. It must have been a curious scene in the hall of Chancellor Thomas, when at the daily meal earls and barons sat round his table, and knights and nobles crowded so thickly at the others that the benches were not sufficient, and the floor was daily strewn with hay or straw in winter, or in summer with green boughs that those who sat on it might not soil their robes. Gold and silver dishes, and goblets, and the richest wines were provided, and the choicest, most costly viands were purchased at any price by his servants for these entertainments: they even gave a hundred shillings for a dish of eels. But the Chancellor seldom touched these delicacies, living on the plainest fare as he sat in his place as the host, answering the pledges of his guests, amusing them with his converse, and providing minstrelsy and sports of all kinds for their recreation. Often the King would ride into the hall in the midst of the gay crowd seated on the floor, throw himself off his horse, leap over the table, and join in the mirth.

These rich feasts afforded afterwards plentiful alms for the poor, who were never forgotten in the height of Becket's

magnificence, and the widow and the oppressed never failed to find a protector in the Chancellor.

His house was full of young squires and pages, the sons of the nobility, who placed them there as the best school of knighthood; and among them was the King's own son Henry, who had been made his pupil. The King seems to have been very apt to laugh at Becket for his strict life and overflowing charity. One very cold day, as they were riding, they met an old man in a thin ragged coat. "Poor old man!" cried Henry, "would it not be a charity to give him a good warm cloak?" "It would indeed," said Becket; "you had better keep the matter in mind." "No, no, it is you that shall have the credit of this great act of charity," said Henry, laughing. "Ha, old man, should you not like this fine warm cloak?" and with these words he began to pull at the scarlet and grey mantle which the Chancellor wore. Becket struggled for it, and in this rough sport they were both nearly pulled off their horses, till the cloak gave way, and the King triumphantly tossed his prize to the astonished old man.

The Chancellor was in the habit of daily giving more costly gifts than these both to rich and poor; gold and silver, robes and jewels, fine armour and horses, hawks and hounds, even fine new ships were bestowed by him, from the wealth of the old merchant Gilbert, as well as from the revenues of his archdeaconry, and of several other benefices, which the lax opinions of his time caused him to think no shame to keep in his own hands.

We cannot call Thomas Becket by any means a perfect character; but thoroughly conscientious he must ever have been, and very self-denying, keeping himself free from every stain in the midst of the court, and guarding himself by strict discipline. He was found to be in the habit of sleeping on the bare boards beside his rich bed, and in secret he

wore sackcloth, and submitted to the lash of penance. His uprightness and incorruptibility as a judge, his wisdom in administering the affairs of State, and his skill in restoring peace to England, made the reign of Henry Plantagenet a relief indeed to his subjects. In almost every respect he lived like a layman. He hunted and hawked, and was found fault with by the Prior of Leicester for wearing a cape with sleeves, which it seems was an unclerical garment. The Prior said it was more unsuitable in one who held so many ecclesiastical preferments, and was likely to become Archbishop of Canterbury. To this Thomas answered: "I know of four priests, each of whom I would rather see Archbishop than myself. If I had that rank I know full well I must either lose the King's favour, or set aside my duty to God."

When Henry went to war with France respecting the inheritance of Eleanor of Aquitaine, his wife, the Chancellor brought to his aid seven hundred knights of his own household, besides twelve hundred in his pay, and four thousand foot soldiers. He fed the knights themselves at his own table, and paid them each three shillings a day for the support of their squires and horses; and he himself commanded them, wearing armour, and riding at their head. He kept them together by the sound of a long slender trumpet, such as was then used only by his own band; and in combat he showed himself strong and dexterous in the use of lance and sword, winning great admiration and respect even from the enemy.

Henry resolved to come to a treaty, and to seal it by asking the King of France, Louis le Jeune, to give his daughter Margaret in marriage to Henry,² the heir of England. Becket was sent on this embassy, and the splendour of his equipment was such as might become its importance. Two

² *The English King's eldest son.*

hundred men on horseback, in armour or gay robes, were his immediate followers, and with them came eight waggons, each drawn by five horses, a groom walking beside each horse, and a driver and guard to each waggon, besides a large fierce dog chained beneath each. The waggons carried provisions and garments, and furniture for the night: two were filled with ale for the French, who much admired that English liquor; another was fitted up as a kitchen, and another for a chapel. There were twelve sumpter-horses carrying smaller articles, and on the back of each of these sat a long-tailed ape! Dogs and hawks with their attendants accompanied the procession, the whole marshalled in regular order, the men singing as they went; and the impression on the minds of all beholders was, "If such was the Chancellor, what must be the King!"

At Paris all these riches were given away; and so resolved was Becket to keep up his character for munificence that he did not choose to be maintained at the expense of the French King; and when Louis, wishing to force him into being his guest, sent orders to the markets round to sell nothing to the English Chancellor, his attendants disguised themselves and bought up all the provisions in the neighbourhood. King Louis acquired a great esteem and admiration for the Chancellor, and willingly granted his request, betrothing Margaret, who was only seven years old, to Prince Henry. She, as well as her little husband, became Becket's pupil by desire of King Henry, and she at least never seems to have lost her attachment to him.

The time Becket dreaded came. The good old peaceable Archbishop Theobald died in 1162, and Henry, who was then at Falaise,³ ordered his Chancellor to England ostensibly to settle a disturbance in the western counties, but in reality, as he declared in a private interview, that he might

³ *In Normandy.*

be elected to the primacy. Becket smiled, and pointing to his gay robes said, "You are choosing a pretty dress to figure at the head of your monks at Canterbury. If you do as you say, my lord, you will soon hate me as much as you love me now, for you assume an authority in Church affairs to which I shall not consent, and there will be plenty of persons to stir up strife between us." Henry did not heed the warning, and King, Bishops, and the Chapter of Canterbury unanimously chose Becket as Archbishop.

XVII.

THE MURDER OF BECKET.

STANLEY.

[The struggle which Becket foresaw was quick to come. Henry's passion was for law and for the enforcement of the same order and justice through every class of society. By the custom of the time no Churchman was subject to the King's justice; every cleric was judged by his bishop, and subjected only to spiritual penalties for a crime, if convicted of it. This brought great disorders; and Henry had raised Becket to the Archbishoprick, believing that he would join him in putting an end to it. Becket however saw the danger of putting all men alike under the King's absolute control, and refused his assent to the plan. A long and bitter strife began between them, which only ended after some years in a seeming reconciliation, that allowed Becket to return from banishment. But he was no sooner in England than the King's wrath was kindled anew against him; and four knights swore to avenge Henry on his enemy, crossed the sea, made their way to Canterbury, and threatened Becket with death. He was drawn into the church by the frightened monks, and found there by the knights who murdered him.]

THE vespers¹ had already begun, and the monks were singing the service in the choir, when two boys rushed up the nave announcing more by their terrified gestures than by their words that the soldiers were bursting into the palace² and monastery. Instantly the cathedral³ was thrown into the utmost confusion; part⁴ remained at prayer, part fled into the numerous hiding-places the vast fabric affords; and part went down the steps of the choir into the transept, to meet the little band at the door. "Come in, come in!" exclaimed one of them, "come in; let us die together." The Archbishop continued to stand outside; and said, "Go and finish the service. So long as you keep in the entrance I shall not come in." They withdrew a few paces, and he stepped within the door; but finding the whole place thronged with people, he paused on the threshold and asked, "What is it that all these people fear?" One general answer broke forth, "The armed men in the cloister." As he turned and said, "I shall go out to them," he heard the clash of arms behind. The knights⁵ had just forced their way through the door from the palace to the monastery, and were advancing along the northern side of the cloister. They were in mail,⁶ with their vizors down, and carried their swords drawn. Three had hatchets. Fitzurse, with the axe he had taken from the carpenters⁷ was foremost, shouting as he came, "Here, here, king's men!" Immediately behind followed four other knights and a motley group—some their own followers, some from the town—with weapons, though not in armour, brought up the rear. At this sight, so unwonted in the peaceful cloisters

¹ Evening service. ² Of the Archbishop. ³ Of Canterbury.
⁴ Of the monks worshipping. ⁵ Reginald Fitzurse, William Tracy, Hugh of Morville, and William Brito.
⁶ Armed in iron coats of mail. Vizors, the moveable part of the helmet, covering the face. ⁷ The knights found some carpenters at work in the monastery, and took their axe.

of Canterbury, not probably beheld since the time when the monastery was sacked by the Danes, the monks within, regardless of all remonstrance, shut the great door of the cathedral,⁸ and proceeded to barricade it with iron bars. A loud knocking was heard from the terrified band without, who, having vainly endeavoured to prevent the entrance of the knights into the cloister, now rushed before them to take refuge in the church. Becket, who had stepped some paces into the cathedral, but was resisting the solicitations of those immediately about him to remove up into the choir for safety, darted back, calling as he went, "Away, you cowards! by virtue of your obedience I command you not to shut the door—the church must not be turned into a castle." With his own hands he thrust them from the door, opened it himself, and catching hold of the excluded monks, dragged them into the building, exclaiming, "Come in—faster, faster!"

At this moment the ecclesiastics, who had hitherto clung round him, fled in every direction; some to the altars in the numerous side chapels, some to the secret chambers with which the walls and roof of the cathedral are filled. Even John of Salisbury, his tried and faithful counsellor, escaped with the rest. Three only remained—Robert, canon of Merton, his old instructor; William Fitzstephen (if we may believe his own account), his lively and worldly-minded chaplain; and Edward Grim the monk, who had joined his household only a few days, but who had been with him once before, on the memorable day when he signed the Constitutions of Clarendon,⁹ and had ventured to rebuke him for the act. Two hiding-places had been specially pointed out to the Archbishop, one was the venerable crypt of the church, with its many dark recesses and chapels, to which a door,

⁸ *Opening from the cloister.*

⁹ *In which Henry's plan*

was embodied.

then as now, opened immediately from the spot where he stood ; the other was the chapel of St. Blaize in the roof, itself communicating with the triforium¹⁰ of the cathedral, and to which there was a ready access through a staircase cut in the thickness of the wall at the corner of the transept. But he positively refused. A last resource remained to the staunch trio who formed his body-guard. They urged him to ascend to the choir ; and hurried him, still resisting, up one of the flights of steps which led from the transept. They no doubt considered that the greater sacredness of that portion of the church would form their best protection. Becket gave way, as when he left the palace, from the thought flashing across his mind that he would die at his post. He would go (such at least was the impression on their minds) to the high altar, and perish in the patriarchal chair,¹¹ in which he and all his predecessors from time immemorial had been enthroned. But this was not to be.

What has taken long to describe must have been compressed in action within a few minutes. The knights who had been checked for a moment by the sight of the closed door, on seeing it unexpectedly thrown open, rushed into the church. It was, we must remember, about five o'clock on a winter evening¹² ; the shades of night were gathering round, and were deepened into a still darker gloom within the high massive walls of the cathedral, which was only illuminated here and there by the solitary lamps that burned before the altars. The twilight lengthening from the shortest day, which was a fortnight before, was just sufficient to reveal the outline of objects, though not enough to show any one distinctly. The transept in which the knights found themselves was in the same relative position as the existing

¹⁰ *The upper floor above the side-aisles.* ¹¹ *Then placed behind the high altar, and overlooking the whole church.*

¹² *The 29th of December.*

portion of the cathedral, still known by the name of the "Martyrdom," which it obtained within five years after the Primate's death. Its arrangements, however, much more closely resembled those which we now see in the corresponding transept on the southern side. Two staircases led from it, one on the east to the northern aisle, one on the west to the entrance of the choir. At its south-west corner, where it joined the nave, there was the little chapel and altar of the Virgin. Its eastern apse was formed by two chapels, raised one above the other; the upper in the roof containing the relics of St. Blaize, the first martyr whose bones had been brought into the church, and which gave to the chapel a peculiar sanctity; the lower containing the altar of St. Benedict, under whose rule from the time of Dunstan the monastery had been placed. Before and around this altar were the tombs of four Saxon and two Norman archbishops. In the centre of the transept was a pillar supporting a gallery leading to the chapel of St. Blaize, and hung at great festivals with curtains and draperies.

Such was the outward aspect and such the associations of the scene which now perhaps opened for the first time on the four soldiers, though the darkness, coupled with their eagerness to find their victim, would have prevented them from noticing anything more than its prominent features. At the moment of their entrance the central pillar exactly intercepted their view of the Archbishop ascending (as it would appear from this circumstance) the eastern staircase. Fitzurse, with his drawn sword in one hand and the carpenter's axe in the other, sprang in first, and turned at once to the right of the pillar. The other three went round it to the left. They could just discern a group of figures mounting the steps, and one of the knights called out to them, "Stay!" Another demanded, "Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the King?" to which no answer was

returned. Fitzurse rushed forward, and stumbling against one of the monks on the lower step, and still unable to distinguish clearly in the darkness, exclaimed, "Where is the Archbishop?" Instantly the answer came—"Reginald, here I am; no traitor, but the Archbishop and Priest of God; what do you wish?"—and from the fourth step which he had reached in his ascent, with a slight motion of his head, apparently a gesture of some significance to the monks who remembered it, he descended to the transept. Fitzurse sprang back two or three paces, and Becket, passing by him, took up his station between the central pillar and the massive wall which still forms the south-west corner of what was then the chapel of St. Benedict. Here they gathered round him, with the cry,¹⁸ "Absolve the bishops whom you have excommunicated." "I cannot do other than I have done," he replied, and turning to Fitzurse, he added—"Reginald, you have received many favours at my hands, why do you come into my church armed?" Fitzurse planted the axe against his breast, and returned for answer, "You shall die,—I will tear out your heart." Another, perhaps in kindness, struck him between the shoulders with the flat of his sword, exclaiming, "Fly; you are a dead man." "I am ready to die," replied the prelate, "for God and the Church; but I warn you in the name of God Almighty to let my men escape."

The well-known horror which in that age was felt at an act of sacrilege, together with the sight of the crowds who were rushing in from the town through the nave, turned their efforts for the next few moments to carrying him out

¹⁸ *On landing in England Becket had excommunicated the prelates who had joined in crowning the young Henry, Henry the Second's son; as to crown kings was a privilege of his see of Canterbury. This was one of the causes of Henry's outburst of wrath.*

of the church. Fitzurse threw down the axe, and tried to drag him out by the collar of his cloak, calling, "Come with us—you are our prisoner." "I will not fly, you detestable fellow," was the reply of the Archbishop, roused to his usual vehemence. The four knights, to whom was now added a sub-deacon, Hugh of Horsea, surnamed Mauclerc, chaplain of Robert de Broc, struggled violently to put him on Tracy's shoulders, but Becket set his back against the pillar, and resisted with all his might, whilst Grim threw his arms around him to aid his efforts. In the scuffle Becket fastened upon Tracy, shook him by his coat of mail, and, exerting his great strength, flung him down on the pavement. Fitzurse rejoined the fray, with a drawn sword, and, as he drew near, Becket gave full vent to his anger; the spirit of the Chancellor rose within him, and with a coarse epithet, not calculated to turn away his adversary's wrath, he exclaimed, "You profligate wretch, you are my man—you have done me fealty¹⁴—you ought not to touch me." Fitzurse, roused to frenzy, retorted—"I owe you no fealty or homage, contrary to my fealty to the King," and waving his sword over his head, cried, "Strike, strike!" but merely dashed off the prelate's cap. The Archbishop covered his eyes with his joined hands, bent his neck, and said, "I commend myself to God, to St. Denys of France, to St. Alfege, and to the saints of the Church." Meanwhile Tracy, who since his fall had thrown off his hauberk¹⁵ to move more easily, sprang forward and struck a more decided blow. Grim, who up to this moment had his arm round Becket, threw it up to intercept the blade, Becket exclaiming, "Spare this defence." The sword lighted on the arm of the monk, which fell wounded or broken; and he fled

¹⁴ *When a knight did homage, or became "man" to a lord, who endowed him with lands, he swore to be faithful to him against the king. His oath was "doing fealty."* ¹⁵ *Body coat of mail.*

disabled to the nearest altar, probably that of St. Benedict, within the chapel. It is a proof of the confusion of the scene that Grim, the receiver of the blow, as well as most of the narrators, believed it to have been dealt by Fitzurse, while Tracy, who is known to have been the man from his subsequent boast, believed that the monk whom he had wounded was John of Salisbury.

The spent force of the stroke descended on Becket's head, grazed the crown, and finally rested on his left shoulder, cutting through the clothes and skin. The next blow, whether struck by Tracy or Fitzurse, was only with the flat of the sword, and again on the bleeding head, which Becket drew back as if stunned, and then raised his clasped hands above it. The blood from the first blow was trickling down his face in a thin streak; he wiped it with his arm, and when he saw the stain he said—"Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." At the third blow, which was also from Tracy, he sank on his knees—his arms falling—but his hands still joined as if in prayer. With his face turned towards the altar of St. Benedict he murmured in a low voice, which might just have been caught by the wounded Grim, who was crouching close by, and who alone reports the words—"For the name of Jesus, and the defence of the Church, I am willing to die." Without moving hand or foot, he fell flat on his face as he spoke, in front of the corner wall of the chapel, and with such dignity that his mantle, which extended from head to foot, was not disarranged. In this posture he received from Richard the Breton a tremendous blow, accompanied with the exclamation (in allusion to a quarrel of Becket with Earl William)¹⁶ "Take this for love of my Lord William, brother of the King." The stroke was aimed with such violence that the

¹⁶ *A bastard son of Henry the Second, Earl William of Salisbury, known as William Longsword.*

scalp or crown of the head—which, it was remarked, was of unusual size—was severed from the skull, and the sword snapped in two on the marble pavement. Hugh of Horsea, the sub-deacon who had joined them as they entered the church, taunted by the others with having taken no share in the deed, planted his foot on the neck of the corpse, thrust his sword into the ghastly wound and scattered the brains over the pavement. “Let us go, let us go,” he said in conclusion; “the traitor is dead; he will rise no more.”

XVIII.

DEATH OF HENRY THE SECOND.

STUBBS.

[Brutal as was Becket's murder, Henry was a great and noble king. His passion was for justice; and it was he who gave our courts of justice the form and shape they have preserved to our own day. To England he was a beneficent ruler; and his faults, great as they were, were so terribly punished as to force us to pity. His later years were broken with the rebellions of his own sons; at last his son Richard leagued himself with the French King, Philip, and suddenly attacking his father in Anjou, when bereft of troops, drove him from Tours, and forced him to submit to a humiliation which brought him to the grave.]

HENRY nerved himself for an interview which he knew could have but one issue. Ill as he was, he moved from Saumur to Azai, and in the plain of Colombieres met Philip and Richard on the day after the capture of Tours.

Henry, notwithstanding his fistula and his fever, was able to sit on horseback. His son Geoffrey¹ had begged leave

¹ *Geoffrey was a bastard son of Henry, but faithful to him throughout.*

of absence, that he might not see the humiliation of his father; but many of his other nobles, and probably two of his three archbishops, rode beside him. The terms which he had come to ratify had been settled beforehand. He had but to signify his acceptance of them by word of mouth. They met face to face, the unhappy father and the undutiful son.² It was a clear, sultry day, a cloudless sky and still air. As the kings³ advanced towards one another a clap of thunder was heard, and each drew back. Again they advanced, and again it thundered louder than before. Henry, wearied and excited, was ready to faint. His attendants held him up on his horse, and so he made his submission. He had but one request to make; it was for a list of the conspirators who had joined with Richard to forsake and betray him. The list was promised, and he returned to Azai. Before he parted with Richard he had to give him the kiss of peace; he did so, but the rebellious son heard his father whisper, and was not ashamed to repeat it as a jest to Philip's ribald courtiers, "May God not let me die until I have taken me due vengeance on thee."

But not even his submission and humiliation procured Henry rest. Among the minor vexations of the last months had been the pertinacious refusal of the monks of Canterbury to obey their archbishop in certain matters in which they believed their privileges to be infringed. Henry had, as usual with him in questions of ecclesiastical law, taken a personal interest in the matter, and had not scrupled to back the archbishop with arms at Canterbury and support of a still more effective kind at Rome. A deputation from the convent, sent out in the vain idea that Henry's present misfortunes would soften his heart towards them, had been looking for him for some days. They found him at Azai,

² *Richard.*

³ *Philip of France and Henry.*

most probably on his return from the field of Colombieres. "The convent of Canterbury salute you as their lord," was the greeting of the monks. "Their lord I have been, and am still, and will be yet," was the King's answer; "small thanks to you, ye traitors," he added below his breath. One of his clerks prevented him from adding more invective. He bethought himself probably that even now the justiciar was asking the convent for money towards the expenses of the war; he would temporize as he had always seemed to do with them. "Go away, and I will speak with my faithful," he said when he had heard their plea. He called William of S. Mere l'Eglise, one of the chiefs of the chancery, and ordered him to write in his name. The letter is extant, and is dated at Azai. It is probably the last document he ever issued. It begins, "Henry, by the grace of God King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, to the convent of Christ Church, Canterbury, greeting, and by God's mercy on his return to England, peace." The substance of the letter is, that the monks should take advantage of the delay in his return to reconsider their position, and the things that make for peace, that they might find an easier way out of their difficulties when he should come.

The monks, delighted with their success, retired, and the King lay down to rest. It was then, probably, that the fatal schedule was brought him, which he had so unwisely demanded at Colombieres. It was drawn up in the form of a release from allegiance; all who had adhered to Richard were allowed to attach themselves henceforth to him, in renunciation of the father's right over them. He ordered the names to be read. The first on the list was that of John.⁴ The sound of the beloved name startled

⁴ *John was Henry's youngest son; and it was his excessive love of him which had roused the jealousy of his other sons, and*

him at once. He leaped up from his bed as one beside himself, and looking round him with a quick troubled glance exclaimed, "Is it true that John, my very heart, the best beloved of all my sons, for whose advancement I have brought upon me all this misery, has forsaken me?" The reader had no other answer to make than to repeat the name. Henry saw that it was on the list, and threw himself back on the couch. He turned his face to the wall, and groaned deeply. "Now," he said, "let all things go what way they may; I care no more for myself nor for the world." His heart was broken, and his death-blow struck.

He could not, however, remain at Azai. His people carried him in a litter to Chinon,⁵ where Geoffrey was waiting for him. It was the fifth day of the fever, and in all probability he was delirious with the excitement of the morning. It was remembered and reported in England that after he was brought to Chinon he cursed the day on which he was born, and implored God's malison⁶ on his sons: the bishops and priests about him implored him to revoke the curse, but he refused. But Giraldus,⁷ bitter enemy as he was, somewhat softened by his misfortune, tells a different tale. He draws the picture of the dying King leaning on Geoffrey's shoulder whilst one of his knights held his feet in his lap. Geoffrey was fanning the flies from the King's face, as he seemed to be sleeping. As they watched, the King revived and opened his eyes. He looked at Geoffrey and blessed him. "My son," he said, "my dearest, for that thou hast ever striven to show towards me such faithfulness and gratitude as son could show to father, if by God's mercy I shall recover of this sickness, I will of a

brought about Richard's revolt. In spite of this John had secretly joined in the conspiracy. ⁵ A town and castle on the Vienne, south of the Loire. ⁶ Curse. ⁷ A historian of the time, who hated Henry and his sons.

surety do to thee the duty of the best of fathers, and I will set thee among the greatest and mightiest men of my dominion. But if I am to die without requiting thee, may God, who is the author and rewarder of all good, reward thee, because in every fortune alike thou hast shown thyself to me so true a son." Geoffrey, of whose sincere sorrow there can be no doubt, was overwhelmed with tears; he could but reply that all he prayed for was his father's health and prosperity. Another day passed, and the King's strength visibly waned. He kept crying at intervals, "Shame, shame on a conquered king." At last, when Geoffrey was again by his side, the poor King kept telling him how he had destined him for the see of York, or, if not York, Winchester; but now he knew that he was dying.⁸ He drew off his best gold ring with the device of the panther, and bade him send it to his son-in-law, the King of Castile; and another very precious ring, with a sapphire of great price and virtue, he ordered to be delivered out of his treasure. Then he desired that his bed should be carried into the chapel, and placed before the altar. He had strength still to say some words of confession, and received "the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord with devotion." And so he died, on the seventh day of the fever, on the sixth of July, the octave of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

⁸ *Geoffrey afterwards became Archbishop of York.*

XIX.

KING RICHARD IN THE HOLY LAND.

MISS YONGE.

[Richard, who succeeded his father as King of England, only visited his realm to gather money for a Crusade, or war for the rescue of Jerusalem from the Mahommedans, which he had vowed to undertake with King Philip of France. Philip and he, however, quarrelled at their first exploit, the siege of Acre; and on the capture of the city the French King returned home. Richard then led his troops to the siege of Jerusalem.]

AT the end of August, 1191, Richard led his crusading troops from Acre into the midst of the wilderness of Mount Carmel, where their sufferings were terrible; the rocky, sandy, and uneven ground was covered with bushes full of long sharp prickles, and swarms of noxious insects buzzed in the air, fevering the Europeans with their stings; and in addition to these natural obstacles, multitudes of Arab horsemen harassed them on every side, slaughtering every straggler who dropped behind from fatigue, and attacking them so unceasingly that it was remarked that throughout their day's track there was not one space of four feet without an arrow sticking in the ground. Richard fought indefatigably, always in the van and ready to reward the gallant exploits of his knights. A young knight who bore a white shield in hopes of gaining some honourable bearing so distinguished himself that Richard thus greeted him at the close of the day: "Maiden knight, you have borne yourself as a lion, and

done the deed of six *croisés*;"¹ and granted him a lion between six crosses on a red field with the motto, "*Tinctus cruroro Saraceno*," tinted with Saracen blood, whence his family are said to have assumed the name of Tynte.

At Arsaaf, on the 7th of September, a great battle was fought. Saladin² and his brother had almost defeated the two Religious Orders,³ and the gallant French knight, Jacques d'Avesne, after losing his leg by a stroke from a scimitar, fought bravely on, calling on the English King until he fell overpowered by numbers. Cœur de Lion⁴ and Guillaume des Barres retrieved the day, hewed down the enemy on all sides, and remained masters of the field. It is even said that Richard and Saladin met hand to hand, but this is uncertain. This victory opened the way to Joppa, where the Crusaders spent the next month in the repair of the fortifications, while the Saracen forces lay at Ascalon. While here Richard often amused himself with hawking, and one day was asleep under a tree when he was aroused by the approach of a party of Saracens, and springing on his horse Frannelle, which had been taken at Cyprus, he rashly pursued them and fell into an ambush. Four knights were slain, and he would have been seized had not a Gascon knight, named Guillaume des Parcelets, called out that he himself was the Malek Rik,⁵ and allowed himself to be taken. Richard offered ten noble Saracens in exchange for this generous knight, whom Saladin restored, together with a valuable horse that had been captured at the same time. A present of another Arab steed accompanied them; but Richard's half-brother, William Longsword, insisted on trying

¹ *Crusaders*: so called from their bearing the mark of a cross on their shoulders. ² *The Sultan of Egypt, who was in possession of the Holy Land.* ³ *The Templars and Hospitallers; orders formed for defence of the Holy Land.* ⁴ *Richard, so called from his lion-like courage.* ⁵ *Great King, or Richard.*

the animal before the King should mount it. No sooner was he on its back than it dashed at once across the country, and before he could stop it he found himself in the midst of the enemy's camp. The two Saracen princes were extremely shocked and distressed lest this should be supposed a trick, and instantly escorted Longsword back with a gift of three chargers which proved to be more manageable.

From Joppa the Crusaders marched to Ramla, and thence on New Year's Day, 1192, set out for Jerusalem through a country full of greater obstacles than they had yet encountered. They were too full of spirit to be discouraged until they came to Bethany, where the two Grand Masters⁶ represented to Richard the imprudence of laying siege to such fortifications as those of Jerusalem at such a season of the year, while Ascalon was ready in his rear for a post whence the enemy would attack him.

He yielded and retreated to Ascalon, which Saladin had ruined and abandoned, and began eagerly to repair the fortifications so as to be able to leave a garrison there. The soldiers grumbled, saying they had not come to Palestine to build Ascalon, but to conquer Jerusalem; whereupon Richard set the example of himself carrying stones, and called on Leopold⁷ to do the same. The sulky reply, "He was not the son of a mason," so irritated Richard that he struck him a blow; Leopold straightway quitted the army and returned to Austria.

It was not without great grief and many struggles that Cœur de Lion finally gave up his hopes of taking Jerusalem. He again advanced as far as Bethany; but a quarrel with Hugh of Burgundy and the defection of the Austrians made it impossible for him to proceed, and he turned back to Ramla. While riding out with a party of knights, one of

⁶ *The masters of the two orders of religious knighthood, the Templars and Hospitallers.* ⁷ *The Duke of Austria.*

them called out, "This way, my lord, and you will see Jerusalem!" "Alas!" said Richard, hiding his face with his mantle, "those who are not worthy to win the Holy City are not worthy to behold it!" He returned to Acre, but there hearing that Saladin was besieging Joppa, he embarked his troops and sailed to its aid. The Crescent⁸ shone on its walls as he entered the harbour; but while he looked on in dismay he was hailed by a priest who had leaped into the sea and swum out to inform him that there was yet time to rescue the garrison, though the town was in the hands of the enemy. He hurried his vessel forward, leapt into the water breast-high, dashed upwards on the shore, ordered his immediate followers to raise a bulwark of casks and beams to protect the landing of the rest, and rushing up a flight of steps, entered the city alone. "St. George! St. George!" That cry dismayed the Infidels, and those in the town to the number of three thousand fled in the utmost confusion, and were pursued for two miles by three knights who had been fortunate enough to find him.

Richard pitched his tent outside the walls, and remained there with so few troops that all were contained in ten tents. Very early one morning, before the King was out of bed, a man rushed into his tent, crying out, "O King! we are all dead men!" Springing up, Richard fiercely silenced him, "Peace! or thou diest by my hand!" Then while hastily donning his suit of mail, he heard that the glitter of arms had been seen in the distance, and in another moment the enemy were upon them, seven thousand in number. Richard had neither helmet nor shield, and only seventeen of his knights had horses; but undaunted he drew up his little force in a compact body, the knights kneeling on one knee covered by their shields, their lances pointing outwards, and between each pair an archer with an assistant to load his cross bow;

⁸ *The standard of the Mussulman Saracens.*

and he stood in the midst encouraging them with his voice, and threatening to cut off the head of the first who turned to fly. In vain did the Saracens charge that mass of brave men, not one-seventh of their number; the shields and lances were impenetrable; and without one forward step or one bolt from the cross-bows their passive steadiness turned back wave after wave of the enemy.

At last the King gave the word for the cross-bowmen to advance, while he with the seventeen mounted knights charged lance in rest. His curtal axe bore down all before it, and he dashed like lightning from one part of the plain to another, with not a moment to smile at the opportune gift from the polite Malek-el-Afdal, who, in the hottest of the fight, sent him two fine horses, desiring him to use them in escaping from this dreadful peril. Little did the Saracen princes imagine that they would find him victorious, and that they would mount two more pursuers! Next came a terrified fugitive with news that three thousand Saracens had entered Joppa! Richard summoned a few knights, and without a word to the rest galloped back into the city. The panic inspired by his presence instantly cleared the streets, and riding back, he again led his troops to the charge; but such were the swarms of Saracens that it was not till evening that the Christians could give themselves a moment's rest, or look round and feel that they had gained one of the most wonderful of victories. Since day-break Richard had not laid aside his sword or axe, and his hand was all over blistered. No wonder that the terror of his name endured for centuries in Palestine, and that the Arab chided his starting horse with, "Dost think that yonder is the Malek Rik?" while the mother stilled her crying child by threats that the Malek Rik should take it.

These violent exertions seriously injured Richard's health, and a low fever placed him in great danger, as well as

several of his best knights. No command or persuasion could induce the rest to commence any enterprise without him, and the tidings from Europe induced him to conclude a peace and return home. Malek-el-Afdal came to visit him, and a truce was signed for three years, three months, three weeks, three days, three hours, and three minutes, thus so quaintly arranged in accordance with some astrological views of the Saracens. Ascalon was to be demolished on condition that free access to Jerusalem was to be allowed to the pilgrims; but Saladin would not restore the piece of the True Cross, as he was resolved not to condescend to what he considered idolatry. Richard sent notice that he was coming back with double his present force to effect the conquest, and the Sultan answered that if the Holy City was to pass into Frank hands, none could be nobler than those of the Malek Rik. Fever and debility detained Richard a month longer at Joppa, during which time he sent the Bishop of Salisbury to carry his offerings to Jerusalem. The prelate was invited to the presence of Saladin, who spoke in high terms of Richard's courage, but censured his rash exposure of his own life. On October 9, 1193, Cœur de Lion took leave of Palestine, watching with tears its receding shores, as he exclaimed, "O Holy Land, I commend thee and thy people unto God. May He grant me yet to return to aid thee."

XX.

JOHN AND THE CHARTER.

GREEN.

[On his return from the Crusade Richard was taken prisoner by the Duke of Austria. He bought his release only to find King Philip attacking his French dominions; and to

plunge into wearisome and indecisive wars, in the midst of which he was slain at the Castle of Chaluz. His brother John, who followed him on the throne, was a vile and weak ruler, under whom the great sovereignty built up by Henry the Second broke utterly down. Normandy, Maine, and Anjou were reft from him by Philip of France, and only Aquitaine remained to him on that side the sea. In England his lust and oppression drove people and nobles to join in resistance to him ; and their resistance found a great leader in the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton.]

FROM the moment of his landing in England Stephen Langton had taken up the constitutional position of the Primate in upholding the old customs and rights of the realm against the personal despotism of the kings. As Anselm had withstood William the Red, as Theobald had withstood Stephen, so Langton prepared to withstand and rescue his country from the tyranny of John. He had already forced him to swear to observe the laws of Edward the Confessor, in other words the traditional liberties of the realm. When the baronage refused to sail for Poitou¹ he compelled the King to deal with them not by arms but by process of law. But the work which he now undertook was far greater and weightier than this. The pledges of Henry the First had long been forgotten when the Justiciar brought them to light, but Langton saw the vast importance of such a precedent. At the close of the month he produced Henry's charter in a fresh gathering of barons at St. Paul's, and it was at once welcomed as a base for the needed reforms. From London Langton hastened to the King, whom he reached at Northampton on his way to attack the nobles of the north, and wrested from him a

¹ *John had summoned the barons to follow him oversea to reconquer his French dominions, but they refused, saying they owed service to him in England, but not in foreign lands.*

promise to bring his strife with them to legal judgement before assailing them in arms.

With his allies gathering abroad John had doubtless no wish to be entangled in a long quarrel at home, and the Archbishop's mediation allowed him to withdraw with seeming dignity. After a demonstration therefore at Durham John marched hastily south again, and reached London in October. His Justiciar at once laid before him the claims of the Council of St. Alban's and St. Paul's; but the death of Geoffry² at this juncture freed him from the pressure which his minister was putting upon him. "Now, by God's feet," cried John, "I am for the first time King and Lord of England," and he entrusted the vacant justiciarship to a Poitevin, Peter des Roches, the Bishop of Winchester, whose temper was in harmony with his own. But the death of Geoffry only called the Archbishop to the front, and Langton at once demanded the King's assent to the Charter of Henry the First.

In seizing on this Charter as a basis for national action Langton showed a political ability of the highest order. The enthusiasm with which its recital was welcomed showed the sagacity with which the Archbishop had chosen his ground. From that moment the baronage was no longer drawn together in secret conspiracies by a sense of common wrong or a vague longing for common deliverance: they were openly united in a definite claim of national freedom and national law. Secretly, and on the pretext of pilgrimage, the nobles met at St. Edmundsbury, resolute to bear no longer with John's delays. If he refused to restore their liberties they swore to make war on him till he confirmed them by Charter under the King's seal, and they parted to raise forces with the purpose of presenting their demands at Christmas. John,

² *The Justiciar, Geoffry Fitz-Peter.*

knowing nothing of the coming storm, pursued his policy of winning over the Church by granting it freedom of election,³ while he embittered still more the strife with his nobles by demanding scutage⁴ from the northern nobles who had refused to follow him to Poitou. But the barons were now ready to act, and early in January, in the memorable year 1215, they appeared in arms to lay, as they had planned, their demands before the King.

John was taken by surprise. He asked for a truce till Easter-tide, and spent the interval in fevered efforts to avoid the blow. Again he offered freedom to the Church, and took vows as a Crusader against whom war was a sacrilege, while he called for a general oath of allegiance and fealty from the whole body of his subjects. But month after month only showed the King the uselessness of further resistance. Though Pandulf⁵ was with him, his vassalage had as yet brought little fruit in the way of aid from Rome; the commissioners whom he sent to plead his cause at the shire-courts brought back news that no man would help him against the charter that the barons claimed: and his efforts to detach the clergy from the league of his opponents utterly failed. The nation was against the King. He was far indeed from being utterly deserted. His ministers still clung to him, men such as Geoffrey de Lucy, Geoffrey de Furnival, Thomas Basset, and William Briwere, statesmen trained in the administrative school of his father, and who, dissent as they might from John's

³ *The Church demanded the free election of bishops by their chapters and abbots by their monks. John, and the kings before him had forced them to elect in the king's presence, that is practically on his nomination.* ⁴ *Scutage, or shield-money, was the commutation paid in lieu of military service by all who owed service to the king.* ⁵ *The Pope's legate. To escape from a sentence of excommunication John had stooped to own himself vassal of the see of Rome.*

mere oppression, still looked on the power of the Crown as the one barrier against feudal anarchy: and beside them stood some of the great nobles of royal blood, his father's bastard Earl William of Salisbury, his cousin Earl William of Warenne, and Henry Earl of Cornwall, a grandson of Henry the First. With him too remained Ranulf, Earl of Chester, and the wisest and noblest of the barons, William Marshal, the elder Earl of Pembroke. William Marshal had shared in the rising of the younger Henry against Henry the Second, and stood by him as he died; he had shared in the overthrow of William Longchamp and in the outlawry of John.⁶ He was now an old man, firm, as we shall see in his aftercourse, to recall the government to the path of freedom and law, but shrinking from a strife which might bring back the anarchy of Stephen's day, and looking for reforms rather in the bringing constitutional pressure to bear upon the King than in forcing them from him by arms.

But cling as such men might to John, they clung to him rather as mediators than adherents. Their sympathies went with the demands of the barons when the delay which had been granted was over and the nobles again gathered in arms at Brackley in Northamptonshire to lay their claims before the King. Nothing marks more strongly the absolutely despotic idea of his sovereignty which John had formed than the passionate surprise which breaks out in his reply. "Why do they not ask for my kingdom?" he cried. "I will never grant such liberties as will make me a slave!" The imperialist theories of the lawyers of his father's court had done their work. Held at bay by the

⁶ *William Longchamp, who had been left as regent of England by Richard, was driven from the realm by the nobles; and John, who strove to take advantage of his brother's absence for his own ambition, was forced to follow him overseas.*

practical sense of Henry, they had told on the more headstrong nature of his sons. Richard and John both held with Glanvill that the will of the prince was the law of the land ; and to fetter that will by the customs and franchises which were embodied in the barons' claims seemed to John a monstrous usurpation of his rights.

But no imperialist theories had touched the minds of his people. The country rose as one man at his refusal. At the close of May London threw open her gates to the forces of the barons, now arrayed under Robert Fitz-Walter as " Marshal of the Army of God and Holy Church." Exeter and Lincoln followed the example of the capital ; promises of aid came from Scotland and Wales ; the northern barons marched hastily under Eustace de Vesci to join their comrades in London. Even the nobles who had as yet clung to the King, but whose hopes of conciliation were blasted by his obstinacy, yielded at last to the summons of the " Army of God." Pandulf indeed and Archbishop Langton still remained with John, but they counselled as Earl Ranulf and William Marshal counselled his acceptance of the Charter. None in fact counselled its rejection save his new Justiciar, the Poitevin Peter des Roches, and other foreigners who knew the barons purposed driving them from the land. But even the number of these was small ; there was a moment when John found himself with but seven knights at his back and before him a nation in arms. Quick as he was, he had been taken utterly by surprize. It was in vain that in the short respite he had gained from Christmas to Easter he had summoned mercenaries to his aid and appealed to his new suzerain,⁷ the Pope. Summons and appeal were alike too late. Nursing wrath in his heart, John bowed to necessity and called the barons to a conference on an island in the Thames between

⁷ *Overlord.*

Windsor and Staines, near a marshy meadow by the river side, the meadow of Runnymede. The King encamped on one bank of the river, the barons covered the flat of Runnymede on the other. Their delegates met on the 15th of July in the island between them, but the negotiations were a mere cloak to cover John's purpose of unconditional submission. The Great Charter was discussed and agreed to in a single day.

XXI.

THE FRIARS AND THE TOWNS.

BREWER.

[The rest of the reign of John and almost the whole reign of his son, Henry the Third, was a struggle between king and people for the confirmation and development of the rights embodied in the Great Charter. Politically it was a time of much misgovernment and trouble, a trouble which ended at last in the great outbreak called the Barons' War. But socially and religiously it was a time of vast progress. England grew richer and more vigorous, the universities became great centres of learning and education; art flourished; and religion was revived by the energy of the Friars. The Friars were the missionaries of the towns, which were now rising into importance.]

It may be difficult, perhaps impossible, at this distance, to realize the social condition of the towns of Europe in the thirteenth century, and consequently the importance of this new movement. The evidence for the history of the land is complete; for the towns it is meagre and unsatisfactory. Their municipal institutions are in full vigour long before history affords the least insight into their social condition

or material prosperity. A political order is established among them, has been working harmoniously for centuries, in a state of society utterly inadequate, in all appearance, to the creation of such wise laws, of authority so judiciously modified. In these communities we trace not the germs, but the fully developed forms of self-government, at a time when, in material comforts, the towns of Western Europe differed little from the rudest mud hovels or shanties of the remotest country village in Ireland or the West of Scotland. If it be true that the English artizan stepped out of his mud-hovel into a more muddy street, when the Moor at one corner of Europe¹ and the Florentine at the other were enjoying the luxury of palaces and the civic improvements of a polished capital; equally true it is that the English mechanic was living in the enjoyment of municipal institutions and privileges which, with all the advantages of imitation and the lapse of five centuries, his predecessors in the arts have yet failed to realize.

Notwithstanding, then, the many material discomforts, and the absence of all due means of cleanliness and health, requisite for preserving large masses of population, crowded into narrow streets, from degenerating into brutality, the town populations of England and of Europe were preserved in some measure from that moral degradation which might have been anticipated from their social condition. Perhaps the exertion necessary for defending their privileges may have secured this happy result; still a vast amount of squalor and wretchedness, of ignorance and poverty, existed in the towns without any adequate means for counteraction. Improvement could not keep pace with the rapid increase of population. Fever and plague, strange and destructive epidemics, spread with unexampled rapidity. Whole quarters of the city suffered from the scourge, without

¹ *The Moors held Southern Spain.*

adequate means of prevention ; without remedy or reparation for the evil when it had occurred. Markets were scantily and irregularly supplied ; roads intercepted by a feudal aristocracy or a discontented sovereign ; an entire population, as in the industrious towns of the Low Countries, exposed to periodical starvation. The narrowness and intricacy of the streets, serving as a protection against the mounted knight and his men-at-arms, served also a worse enemy, the plague or the sweating sickness, and decimated the population, to whom sanitary precautions were unknown. The lazy ditches and stagnant ponds, into which ran the refuse and garbage of the shambles,—a poor protection to the various quarters of the town,—sent up their fetid odours, rank with fever and ague, into the stifled chamber and open booth of the artizan.

Upon the higher ground, as may be seen in many towns in England at the present day, stood the Guildhall and the Ward of the Aldermen, distinguished by houses partially built of stone pilfered from the old Roman monuments, forming a striking contrast to the outer circle and the suburbs, where, down to the water's edge and straggling beyond it, in an uncertain and precarious tenure, rose wooden sheds, rudely plastered or white-washed, on the edge of the town-ditch, sheltering the last new settlers that had flocked into the town for occupation or protection ; a mixed race, of whom little inquiry was made ; tolerated, not acknowledged ; of all blood, all climates, and all religions ; permitted to live or die, as it pleased God or themselves, provided only that they yielded due obedience to the proper civic authorities. Here the leprosy and the plague were certain to enter first ; here infection did its worst. In the higher city there might be parish churches and schools ; a skilful leech² to look after the welfare, bodily and spiritual, of the inhabitants. In

² *Physician.*

defect of these, the different guilds ³ established in the City proper provided in some measure for the instruction and comfort of the master and his apprentices. The city ponds and rivulets yielded fresh water to those who were willing to fetch it ; the chaplain of the guild, its church or chapel, provided for the common worship and spiritual welfare of its members ; the common purse of the guild furnished relief against sudden misfortune, and paid for the funeral obsequies and masses of the defunct brother. But for the unguilted population, who resided in the suburbs, and increased daily and rapidly in the unsettled condition of the country ; or as the oppression or harshness or stern justice of the feudal baron made the town a more safe and desirable abiding place than the country, for these there were no such advantages. Imagination can only conceive their condition ; history is silent.

Now, it was to this class of the population, in the first instance, that the attention of the Franciscan ⁴ was directed ; in these wretched localities his convent and Order were seated. I have not been able to examine the primitive position of all their religious houses in England ; but a glance at the more important will show the general correctness of this statement. In London, York, Warwick, Oxford, Bristol, Lynn, and elsewhere, their convents stood in the suburbs and abutted on the city walls. They made choice of the low, swampy, and undrained spots in the large towns, among the poorest and most neglected quarters. Unlike the magnificent monasteries and abbeys, which excite admiration to this day, their buildings, to the very last, retained their primitive squat, low, and meagre proportions. Their first house, at their settlement in London, stood in the neighbourhood of Cornhill, where they built cells, stuffing

³ *Companies for trade.*
Francis of Assisi.

⁴ *An order of friars founded by*

the party-walls with dried grass. Near the shambles in Newgate, and close upon the city gate of that name, on a spot appropriately called Stinking Lane, rose the chief house of the Order in England. In Oxford the parish of St. Ebbe's, in Cambridge the decayed town gaol, in Norwich the water side, running close to the walls of the town, are the special and chosen spots of the Franciscan missionary.

In all instances the poverty of their buildings corresponded with those of the surrounding district: their living and lodging are no better than the poorest among whom they settle. At Cambridge their chapel was erected by a single carpenter in one day. At Shrewsbury, where owing to the liberality of the townsmen, the dormitory⁵ walls had been built of stone, the minister of the Order had them removed and replaced with mud. Decorations and ornaments of all kinds were zealously excluded. At Gloucester, a friar was deprived of his hood for painting his pulpit, and the warden of the same place suffered similar punishment for tolerating pictures. Their meals corresponded with the poverty of their buildings. Mendicancy⁶ might encourage idleness, but it also secured effectually the mean and meagre diet of the friars. It kept them on a par with the masses among whom their founder intended them to labour. They could not sell their offerings; they were not permitted to receive more than their actual necessities required; meal, salt, figs, and apples; wood for firing; stale beer or milk. Whatever the weather, however rough the way, they threaded the muddy streets and unpaved roads barefooted and bare-headed, leaving the prints of their bleeding feet upon the ground, in gowns of the coarsest cloth, which an economical vestryman of this nineteenth century would be ashamed to offer to the most refractory pauper in a parish workhouse.

⁵ *Place for sleeping.*
for alms.

⁶ *The Friars subsisted by begging*

XXII.

DEATH OF SIMON OF MONTFORT.

PROTHERO.

[While this great social improvement was going on the misgovernment of Henry the Third was striving to undo all that the Great Charter had done. At last the long struggle between the King and nobles drove the nation to arms: and Earl Simon of Leicester, Simon de Montfort, put himself at the head of the patriotic barons who were resolved to force Henry to rule according to law. For a time they were successful; the King was defeated at Lewes; and the government passed into the hands of Earl Simon and his supporters. But strife broke out among the patriots themselves; the bulk of the nobles forsook the Earl; and the King's son, Edward, afterwards King Edward the First, gathered an army and marched against him. Earl Simon was expecting the coming of reinforcements under his son to strengthen the weak force about him, when Edward (who had already surprized the son's force and cut it to pieces) fell upon De Montfort's army at Evesham.]

WHEN the Earl¹ heard that the troops² were seen approaching, he cried out with joy, "It is my son. But nevertheless," he added, "go up and look and bring me word again." His barber, Nicholas, who was gifted with a long sight and had some knowledge of heraldry, mounted the belltower of the abbey³ and appears to have been followed by his master. At first Nicholas distinguished the ensigns of young

¹ *Earl Simon of Montfort, who was encamped at Evesham. Of Edward.* ³ *Of Evesham.*

Simon and his partisans floating in the van of the advancing force.⁴ Another minute, and he saw they were in hostile hands, a bitter proof of the fate of his friends, and a warning of his own. From the tower-roof one can still look out with Simon's eyes upon the beautiful landscape below. Straight in front of him, about a mile distant, he looked upon the slopes of Green Hill, glistening with the weapons of those who were thirsting for his blood. A little to the right, over the shoulder of the hill, his eye followed the course of the winding stream towards the place where his home lay. Between him and the hill stretched a small plain, over which he would have to pass to his death, a plain probably then as now bright with gardens, and golden with the ripening fruit of autumn. Beneath him lay the little town,⁵ and as he glanced at the bridge, while one thought of escape crossed his mind, he may have seen the horsemen of Mortimer⁶ hastening down to block his path. Behind him lay the river, before him the foe. It needed not many moments to show him that all was over. And bitterer than the thought of his own fate, with years of life and power yet in him, more numbing than the vague sense of what had befallen his son, must have been the conviction that for a time at least the cause which he had at heart, and for the sake of which he had looked death in the face, must perish with him. For a time at least: let us hope that in his moment of agony he was consoled by some vision of what was to come, by the faith that in after years one yet greater and far more fortunate than he would arise and protect the liberties of the nation he had adopted for his own. But it was no time for dreams; he would sell his

⁴ *Edward had surprized the young De Montfort's army, and taken its standards, which he displayed in front of his own troops to aid him in taking the Earl by surprize.* ⁵ *Of Evesham.* ⁶ *A baron of the Welsh border who was helping Edward*

life as dearly as he could. "May the Lord have mercy upon our souls," he said, "for our bodies are undone."

Outnumbered as they were by three to one, victory was out of the question. The Earl's friends urged him to fly, but the thought of flight for himself was not in his mind. A natural flash of anger burst forth in the remark that it was the folly of his own sons which had brought him to this pass. Nevertheless he endeavoured to persuade his eldest son Henry, his old comrade Hugh Despenser, and others to fly while there was yet time, and maintain the good cause when fortune should smile again. But one and all refused to desert him, preferring not to live if their leader died. "Come then," he said, "and let us die like men; for we have fasted here and we shall breakfast in heaven." His troops were hastily shriven⁷ by the aged Bishop of Worcester, who had performed the same office a year before upon a happier field.⁸ Then he led them out against the enemy, with the white cross again upon their shoulders, in as close order as he could. In the midst of them was the King,⁹ for Simon seems to the last to have cherished a faint hope of cutting his way through his adversaries; and as at Lewes, the possession of the royal person was everything to him. As they neared the hill, Prince Edward's troops, who had been in no hurry to leave their point of vantage, began to descend upon them. Simon's heart was struck with admiration of the fair array before him, so different from that which he had met a year before; his soldierly pride told him to whom their skill was due. "By the arm of St. James," he cried, "they come on well; they learnt that not of themselves, but of me."

On the south-western slope of Green Hill there is a

⁷ Absolved after confession of their sins. ⁸ At Lewes, where Earl Simon won a great victory. ⁹ Henry the Third, whom the Earl had kept a virtual prisoner.

small valley or combe; in this hollow the chief struggle raged. On the further side, in the grounds of a private house, stands the obelisk, which marks the spot where, according to tradition, Simon de Montfort fell. Towards the higher part of the combe is a spring, still called De Montfort's Well, which, on the day of the battle, is said to have run with blood. Prince Edward began the fray, and while the Earl was engaged with him, Gloucester came up with a second body on his left, so that he was soon surrounded. The Welsh infantry,¹⁰ poor, half-armed troops, fled at once, and were cut down in the neighbouring gardens by Mortimer's forces, which must now have been advancing from the rear. Simon's horse was killed under him; his eldest son was among the first to fall. When this was told him, he cried, "Is it so? then indeed is it time for me to die;" and rushing upon the enemy with redoubled fury, and wielding his sword with both his hands, the old warrior laid about him with so terrific force, that had there been but half a dozen more like himself, says one who saw the fight, he would have turned the tide of battle. As it was he nearly gained the crest of the hill. But it was not to be. For a while he stood "like a tower," but at length a foot soldier, lifting up his coat of mail, pierced him in the back, and, with the words "Dieu merci"¹¹ on his lips, he fell. Then the battle became a butchery. No quarter was asked or given. The struggle lasted for about two hours in the early summer morning, and then all was over.

¹⁰ *The bulk of the Earl's army consisted of Welshmen, whom he had brought with him across the Severn when marching to join his son.*

¹¹ *Thank God!*

XXIII.

AN EARLY ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT.

PALGRAVE.

[On the death of Earl Simon the cause of English freedom and English law seemed lost. But his conqueror was as averse from lawless rule as the Earl himself; and when Edward became king on his father's death he ruled justly and nobly. What he set himself to do from the first was the work of wise government and the making of wise laws. Till now English kings had made laws only with the consent of their bishops and higher barons, gathered in the Great Council of the realm. It was Edward who first made laws in what has ever since been called Parliament. For this purpose he called on the shires and larger towns to choose men to "represent" them, or appear in their stead in the Great Council; the shires sending knights of the shire, the towns burgesses. These, added to the peers or high nobles and to the bishops, made up Parliament. It was at a later time that Parliament divided itself into two Houses, the House of Lords, in which sat the bishops and peers, and the House of Commons, in which sat the burgesses and knights of the shire. The business of Parliament was not only to make good laws for the realm, but to grant money to the King for the needs of the state in peace and war, and to authorize him to raise this money by taxes or subsidies from his subjects. So at first people saw little of the great good of such Parliaments, but dreaded their calling together, because they brought taxes with them. Nor did men seek as they do now to be chosen as members of Parliament, for the way thither was long and travel costly, and so they did their best not to be chosen, and when chosen had to be bound over under pain of heavy fines to serve in Parliament. This is what Sir Francis Palgrave has striven to bring out in his picture of an election under Edward the First.]

DURING the last half-hour the suitors¹ had been gathering round the shire-oak,² awaiting the arrival of the high officer whose duty it was to preside.³ Notwithstanding the size of the meeting there was an evident system in the crowd. A considerable proportion of the throng consisted of little knots of husbandmen or churls, four or five of whom were generally standing together, each company seeming to compose a deputation. The churls might be easily distinguished by their dress, a long frock of coarse yet snow-white linen, hanging down to the same length before and behind, and ornamented round the neck with broidery rudely executed in blue thread. They wore in fact the attire of the carter and ploughman, a garb which was common enough in country parts about five-and-twenty years ago,⁴ but which will probably soon be recollected only as an ancient costume, cast away with all the other obsolete characteristics of merry Old England. These groups of peasantry were the representatives of their respective townships, the rural communes into which the whole realm was divided;⁵ and each had a species of chieftain or headman in the person of an individual who, though it was evident that he belonged to the same rank in society, gave directions to the rest. Interspersed among the churls, though not confounded with them, were also very many well-clad persons, possessing an appearance of rustic respectability, who were also subjected to some kind of organization, being collected into sets of twelve men each, who were busily employed in confabulation among themselves. These were "the sworn centenary deputies," or jurors, the sworn men who answered for

¹ *The holders of land from the Crown, who were bound to attend at the county-court or shire-meeting.* ² *Round which the shire-meeting was held.* ³ *The sheriff.* ⁴ *Known as the "smock-frock."* ⁵ *The township usually answered to the modern parish.*

represented the several hundreds.⁶ A third class of members of the shire court could be equally distinguished, proudly known by their gilt spurs and blazoned tabards⁷ as the provincial knighthood, and who, though thus honoured, appeared to mix freely and affably in converse with the rest of the commons⁸ of the shire.

A flourish of trumpets announced the approach of the high sheriff, Sir Giles de Argentine, surrounded by his escort of javelin men, tall yeomen, all arrayed in a uniform suit of livery, and accompanied amongst others by four knights, the coroners,⁹ who took cognizance of all pleas that concerned the king's rights within the county, and who, though they yielded precedence to the sheriff, were evidently considered to be almost of equal importance with him. "My masters," said the sheriff to the assembled crowd, "even now hath the port-joye¹⁰ of the chancery delivered to me certain most important writs of our sovereign lord the King, containing his grace's high commands." At this time the chancellor, who might be designated as principal secretary of state for all departments, was the great medium of communication between king and subject; whatever the sovereign had to ask or to tell was usually asked or told by, or under, the directions of this high functionary. Now although the gracious declarations which the chancellor was charged to deliver were much diversified in their form, yet somehow or other they all conveyed the same intent. Whether directing the preservation of the peace or preparing for the prosecution of a war, whether announcing a royal birth or a royal death, the knighthood of the king's

⁶ A hundred was a group of townships or parishes.

⁷ The tabard was an overcoat emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the knight.

⁸ All classes below that of the peers, or greater nobles.

⁹ The coroners of our day have sunk in dignity, and have now only the duty of inquiry into violent deaths.

¹⁰ The port-joye was the messenger of the chancellor.

son of the marriage of the king's daughter, the mandates of our ancient kings invariably conclude with a request or a demand for money's worth or money.

The present instance offered no exception to the general rule. King Edward,¹¹ greeting his loving subjects, expatiated upon the miseries which the realm was likely to sustain by the invasion of the wicked, barbarous, and perfidious Scots. Church and state, he alleged, were in equal danger, and "inasmuch as that which concerneth all ought to be determined by the advice of all concerned, we have determined," continued the writ, "to hold our Parliament at Westminster in eight days from the feast of St. Hilary." The effect of the announcement was magical. Parliament! Even before the second syllable of the word had been uttered visions of aids¹² and subsidies rose before the appalled multitude, grim shadows of assessors and collectors floated in the ambient air. Sir Gilbert Hastings instinctively plucked his purse out of his sleeve; drawing the strings together, he twirled, twisted, and tied them in the course of half-a-minute of nervous agitation into a Gordian knot which apparently defied any attempt to undo it, except by the means practised by the son of Ammon.¹³ The abbot of Oseney¹⁴ forthwith guided his steed to the right-about and rode away from the meeting as fast as he could trot, turning the deafest of all deaf ears to the monitions which he received to stay. The sheriff and the other functionaries alone preserved a tranquil, but not a cheerful gravity, as Sir Giles commanded his clerk to read the whole of the writ, by which he was commanded "to cause two knights to be elected for the shire; and from every city within his bailiwick two citizens;

¹¹ *The First.* ¹² *Grants of money made to the Crown by Parliament and raised by taxation.* ¹³ *Alexander the Great, who claimed to be the son of the God Ammon, and cut the Gordian knot, which none could untie, by a stroke of his sword.*

¹⁴ *A religious house outside Oxford.*

and from every borough two burgesses : all of them of the more discreet and wiser sort ; and to cause them to come before the King in this Parliament at the before mentioned day and place, with full powers from their respective communities to perform and consent to such matters as by common counsel shall then and there be ordained ; and this you will in nowise omit, as you will answer at your peril."

A momentary pause ensued. The main body of the suitors retreated from the high sheriff, as though he had been a centre of repulsion. After a short but vehement conversation amongst themselves, one of the bettermost sort of yeomen, a gentleman farmer, if we may use the modern term, stepped forward and addressed Sir Giles : " Your worship well knows that we, poor commons, are not bound to proceed to the election. You have no right to call upon us to interfere. So many of the earls and barons of the shire, the great men, who ought to take the main trouble, burthen, and business of the choice of the knights upon themselves, are absent now in the King's service, that we neither can nor dare proceed to nominate those who are to represent the county. Such slender folk as we have no concern with these weighty matters. How can we tell who are best qualified to serve ? "

" What of that, John Trafford," said the sheriff ; " do you think that his grace will allow his affairs to be delayed by excuses such as these ? You suitors of the shire are as much bound and obliged to concur in the choice of the county members as any baron of the realm. Do your duty ; I command you in the King's name." John Trafford had no help. Like a wise debater, he yielded to the pinch of the argument without confessing that he felt it : and having muttered a few words to the sheriff, which might be considered as an assent, a long conference took place

between him and some of his brother stewards, as well as with the other suitors. During this confabulation several nods and winks of intelligence passed between Trafford and a well-mounted knight ; and whilst the former appeared to be settling the business with the suitors, the latter, who had been close to Sir Giles, continued gradually backing and sidling away through the groups of shiresmen, and just as he had got clear out of the ring, John Trafford declared, in a most sonorous voice, that the suitors had chosen Sir Richard de Pogeys as one of their representatives.

The sheriff, who, keeping his eye fixed upon Sir Richard as he receded, had evidently suspected some manoeuvre, instantly ordered his bailiffs to secure the body of the member, "and," continued he with much vehemence, "Sir Richard must be forthwith committed to custody, unless he gives good bail—two substantial freeholders—that he will duly attend in his place amongst the commons on the first day of the session, according to the law and usage of Parliament." All this however was more easily said than done. Before the verbal precept had proceeded from the lips of the sheriff Sir Richard was galloping away at full speed across the fields. Off dashed the bailiffs after the member amidst the shouts of the surrounding crowd, who forgot all their grievances in the stimulus of the chase, which they contemplated with the perfect certainty of receiving some satisfaction by its termination ; whether by the escape of the fugitive, in which case their common enemy, the sheriff, would be liable to a heavy amercement ;¹⁵ or by the capture of the knight, a result which would give them almost equal delight, by imposing a disagreeable and irksome duty upon an individual who was universally disliked, in consequence of his overbearing harshness and domestic tyranny. One of the two above-mentioned gratifications might be considered

¹⁵ *Fine*

as certain. But besides these, there was a third contingent amusement, by no means to be overlooked, namely, the chance that in the contest those respectable and intelligent functionaries, the sheriff's bailiffs, might somehow or another come to some kind of harm. In this charitable expectation the good men of the shire were not entirely disappointed. Bounding along the open fields, whilst the welkin resounded with the cheers of the spectators, the fleet courser of Sir Richard sliddered on the grass, then stumbled and fell down the sloping side of one of the many ancient British entrenchments by which the plain was crossed ; and horse and rider rolling over, the latter deposited quite at the bottom of the foss, unhurt, but much discomposed.

Horse and rider were immediately on their respective legs again : the horse shook himself, snorted, and was quite ready to start ; but Sir Richard had to regird his sword, and before he could remount the bailiffs were close at him ; Dick-o'-the-Gyves attempted to trip him up, John Catchpole seized him by the collar of his pourpoint.¹⁶ A scuffle ensued, during which the nags of the bailiffs slyly took the opportunity of emancipating themselves from control. Distinctly seen from the Moot-hill, the strife began and ended in a moment ; in what manner it had ended was declared without any further explanation, when the officers rejoined the assembly, by Dick's limping gait and the closed eye of his companion. In the meanwhile Sir Richard had wholly disappeared ; and the special return made by the sheriff to the writ, which I translate from the original, will best elucidate the bearing of the transaction. "Sir Richard de Pogeys, knight, duly elected by the shire, refused to find bail for his appearance in Parliament at the day and place within mentioned, and having grievously assaulted my bailiffs in contempt of the King, his crown and dignity, and absconded

¹⁶ *Overcoat or doublet.*

to the Chiltern Hundreds,¹⁷ into which liberty, not being shire-land or guildable, I cannot enter, I am unable to make any other execution of the writ as far as he is concerned. At the present day a nominal stewardship connected with the Chiltern Hundreds, called an office of profit under the Crown, enables the member, by a species of juggle, to resign his seat. But it is not generally known that this ancient domain, which now affords the means of retreating out of the House of Commons, was in the fourteenth century employed as a sanctuary, in which the knight of the shire took refuge in order to avoid being dragged into Parliament against his will. Being a distinct jurisdiction, in which the sheriff had no control, and where he could not capture the county member, it enabled the recusant to baffle the process, at least until the short session had closed.

XXIV.

EXPULSION OF JEWS.

GREEN.

[One of the first results of the meeting of the Parliament was the driving of the Jews from the realm. They had been protected by the kings as valuable subjects, who paid for protection with constant gifts. But they were hated by the people, partly through their extortion, and partly through religious fanaticism; and now that England itself was ready to fill the King's treasury through grants in Parliament, the King had no longer any cause for protecting them.]

JEWISH traders had followed William the Conqueror from Normandy, and had been enabled by his protection to

¹⁷ *The district of the Chilterns, or line of chalk-hills to the east of Buckinghamshire.*

establish themselves in separate quarters or "Jewries" in all larger English towns. The Jew had no right or citizenship in the land. The Jewry in which he lived was exempt from the common law. He was simply the King's chattel,¹ and his life and goods were at the King's mercy. But he was too valuable a possession to be lightly thrown away. If the Jewish merchant had no standing-ground in the local court the king enabled him to sue before a special justiciar; his bonds² were deposited for safety in a chamber of the royal palace at Westminster; he was protected against the popular hatred in the free exercise of his religion and allowed to build synagogues and to manage his own ecclesiastical affairs by means of a chief rabbi. The royal protection was dictated by no spirit of tolerance or mercy. To the kings the Jew was a mere engine of finance. The wealth which he accumulated was wrung from him whenever the crown had need, and torture and imprisonment were resorted to when milder means failed. It was the gold of the Jew that filled the royal treasury at the outbreak of war or of revolt. It was in the Hebrew coffers that the foreign kings found strength to hold their baronage at bay.

That the presence of the Jew was, at least in the earlier years of his settlement, beneficial to the nation at large, there can be little doubt. His arrival was the arrival of a capitalist; and, heavy as was the usury he necessarily exacted, in the general insecurity of the time his loans gave an impulse to industry. The century which followed the Conquest witnessed an outburst of architectural energy which covered the land with castles and cathedrals; but castle and cathedral alike owed their erection to the loans of the Jew. His own example gave a new vigour

¹ *Personal property.*

² *For loans.*

to domestic architecture. The buildings which, as at Lincoln and Bury St. Edmund's, still retain their name of "Jews' Houses" were almost the first houses of stone which superseded the mere hovels of the English burghers. Nor was their influence simply industrial. Through their connexion with the Jewish schools in Spain and the East they opened a way for the revival of physical sciences. A Jewish medical school seems to have existed at Oxford; Roger Bacon himself studied under English rabbis. But the general progress of civilization now drew little help from the Jew, while the coming of the Cahorsine and Italian bankers³ drove him from the field of commercial finance. He fell back on the petty usury of loans to the poor, a trade necessarily accompanied with much of extortion, and which roused into fiercer life the religious hatred against their race. Wild stories floated about of children carried off to be circumcised or crucified, and a Lincoln boy who was found slain in a Jewish house was canonized by popular reverence as "St. Hugh." The first work of the Friars was to settle in the Jewish quarters and attempt their conversion, but the popular fury rose too fast for these gentler means of reconciliation. When the Franciscans saved seventy Jews from hanging by their prayer to Henry the Third the populace angrily refused the brethren alms.

But all this growing hate was met with a bold defiance. The picture which is commonly drawn of the Jew as timid, silent, crouching under oppression, however truly it may represent the general position of his race throughout mediæval Europe, is far from being borne out by historical fact on this side the Channel. In England the attitude of the Jew, almost to the very end, was an attitude of proud

³ *Cahors in Southern France, and Lucca and Florence in Italy, were the great banking towns of the time.*

and even insolent defiance. He knew that the royal policy exempted him from the common taxation, the common justice, the common obligations of Englishmen. Usurer, extortioner as the realm held him to be, the royal justice would secure him the repayment of his bonds. A royal commission visited with heavy penalties any outbreak of violence against the King's "chattels." The Red King⁴ actually forbade the conversion of a Jew to the Christian faith; it was a poor exchange, he said, that would rid him of a valuable property and give him only a subject. We see in such a case as that of Oxford the insolence that grew out of this consciousness of the royal protection. Here as elsewhere the Jewry was a town within a town, with its own language, its own religion and law, its peculiar commerce, its peculiar dress. No city bailiff could penetrate into the square of little alleys which lay behind the present Town Hall; the Church itself was powerless to prevent a synagogue from rising in haughty rivalry over against the cloister of St. Frideswide. Prior Philip of St. Frideswide complains bitterly of a certain Hebrew who stood at his door as the procession of the saint passed by, mocking at the miracles which were said to be wrought at her shrine. Halting and then walking firmly on his feet, showing his hands clenched as if with palsy and then flinging open his fingers, the Jew claimed gifts and oblations from the crowd that flocked to St. Frideswide's shrine on the ground that such recoveries of life and limb were quite as real as any that Frideswide ever wrought. Sickness and death in the prior's story avenge the saint on her blasphemer, but no earthly power, ecclesiastical or civil, seems to have ventured to deal with him. A more daring act of fanaticism showed the temper of the Jews even at the close of Henry the Third's reign. As the usual procession of scholars and

⁴ *William Rufus.*

citizens returned from St. Frideswide's on the Ascension Day of 1268 a Jew suddenly burst from a group of his comrades in front of the synagogue, and wrenching the crucifix from its bearer trod it under foot. But even in presence of such outrage as this the terror of the Crown sheltered the Oxford Jews from any burst of popular vengeance. The sentence of the King condemned them to set up a cross of marble on the spot where the crime was committed, but even this sentence was in part remitted, and a less offensive place was found for the cross in an open plot by Merton College.

Up to Edward's day indeed the royal protection had never wavered. Henry the Second granted the Jews a right of burial outside every city where they dwelt. Richard punished heavily a massacre of the Jews at York, and organized a mixed court of Jews and Christians for the registration of their contracts. John suffered none to plunder them save himself, though he once wrested from them a sum equal to a year's revenue of his realm. The troubles of the next reign brought in a harvest greater than even the royal greed could reap; the Jews grew wealthy enough to acquire estates; and only a burst of popular feeling prevented a legal decision which would have enabled them to own freeholds. But the sack of Jewry after Jewry showed the popular hatred during the Barons' war, and at its close fell on the Jews the more terrible persecution of the law. To the cry against usury and the religious fanaticism which threatened them was now added the jealousy with which the nation that had grown up round the Charter regarded all exceptional jurisdictions or exemptions from the common law and the common burthens of the realm. As Edward looked on the privileges of the Church or the baronage, so his people looked on the privileges of the Jews. The growing weight of the Parliament told against them. Statute after statute hemmed them in. They were

forbidden to hold real property, to employ Christian servants, to move through the streets without the two white tablets of wool on their breasts which distinguished their race. They were prohibited from building new synagogues or eating with Christians or acting as physicians to them. Their trade, already crippled by the rivalry of the bankers of Cahors, was annihilated by a royal order which bade them renounce usury under pain of death. At last persecution could do no more, and Edward, eager at the moment to find supplies for his treasury, and himself swayed by the fanaticism of his subjects, bought the grant of a fifteenth from clergy and laity by consenting to drive the Jews from his realm. No share of the enormities which accompanied this expulsion can fall upon the King, for he not only suffered the fugitives to take their personal wealth with them but punished with the halter those who plundered them at sea. But the expulsion was none the less cruel. Of the sixteen thousand who preferred exile to apostasy few reached the shores of France. Many were wrecked, others robbed and thrown overboard. One ship-master turned out a crew of wealthy merchants on to a sandbank and bade them call a new Moses to save them from the sea.

XXV.

WANDERINGS OF THE BRUCE.

SCOTT.

[While thus ruling within his realm, Edward aimed in his work without it at the union under one government of the different kingdoms which parted Britain between them. In the early years of his reign he succeeded in conquer-

ing Wales and uniting it to the English Crown. In his later years Edward was drawn in like fashion to attempt the union of Scotland with England. There was a contest among the Scotch lords for the Crown of the country, and as all appealed to Edward he gave it to John Balliol, but on terms that made him a vassal of England. Balliol soon revolted against this, and Edward drove him from his realm and conquered Scotland. But the Scottish people were as stout-hearted and fond of freedom as the English themselves; and they soon rose under William Wallace, drove out the English, and invaded England in turn. Edward however won a great victory over Wallace at Stirling, and again subdued the land. Wallace was betrayed into his hands and put to death, and for a while all seemed quiet. But in Edward's last years Robert Bruce, a baron both of England and Scotland, claimed the Scotch Crown and stirred up fresh resistance. Edward himself died as he marched against him, but his troops defeated Bruce, and he was driven to wander over the land, pursued by the English and those Scots who supported them.]

ABOUT the time when the Bruce was yet at the head of but few men, Sir Aymer de Valence, who was Earl of Pembroke,¹ together with John of Lorn,² came into Galloway,³ each of them being at the head of a large body of men. John of Lorn had a bloodhound with him, which it was said had formerly belonged to Robert Bruce himself; and having been fed by the King with his own hands, it became attached to him, and would follow his footsteps anywhere, as dogs are well known to trace their master's steps, whether they be bloodhounds or not. By means of this hound, John of Lorn thought he should certainly find out Bruce, and take revenge on him for the death of his relation Comyn.⁴

¹ *And English regent in Scotland.* ² *The chieftain of what is now Argyleshire.*
³ *South-western Scotland, where Bruce was lurking.* ⁴ *John Comyn, another claimant of the Scottish Crown, whom Bruce had stabbed in a church.*

When these two armies advanced upon King Robert, he at first thought of fighting with the English Earl; but becoming aware that John of Lorn was moving round with another large body to attack him in the rear, he resolved to avoid fighting at that time, lest he should be oppressed by numbers. For this purpose, the King divided the men he had with him into three bodies, and commanded them to retreat by three different ways, thinking the enemy would not know which party to pursue. He also appointed a place at which they were to assemble again. But when John of Lorn came to the place where the army of Bruce had been thus divided, the bloodhound took his course after one of these divisions, neglecting the other two, and then John of Lorn knew that the King must be in that party; so he also made no pursuit after the two other divisions of the Scots, but followed that which the dog pointed out, with all his men.

The King again saw that he was followed by a large body, and being determined to escape from them, if possible, he made all the people who were with him disperse themselves different ways, thinking thus that the enemy must needs lose trace of him. He kept only one man along with him, and that was his own foster-brother, or the son of his nurse. When John of Lorn came to the place where Bruce's companions had dispersed themselves, the bloodhound, after it had snuffed up and down for a little, quitted the footsteps of all the other fugitives, and ran barking upon the track of two men out of the whole number. Then John of Lorn knew that one of these two must needs be King Robert. Accordingly, he commanded five of his men that were speedy of foot to chase after him, and either make him prisoner, or slay him. The Highlanders started off accordingly, and ran so fast, that they gained sight of Robert and his foster-brother. The King

asked his companion what help he could give him, and his foster-brother answered he was ready to do his best. So these two turned on the five men of John of Lorn, and killed them all. It is to be supposed they were better armed than the others were, as well as stronger and more desperate.

But by this time Bruce was very much fatigued, and yet they dared not sit down to take any rest; for whenever they stopped for an instant, they heard the cry of the blood-hound behind them, and knew by that, that their enemies were coming up fast after them. At length, they came to a wood, through which ran a small river. Then Bruce said to his foster-brother, "Let us wade down this stream for a great way, instead of going straight across, and so this unhappy hound will lose the scent; for if we were once clear of him, I should not be afraid of getting away from the pursuers." Accordingly the King and his attendant walked a great way down the stream, taking care to keep their feet in the water, which could not retain any scent where they had stepped. Then they came ashore on the further side from the enemy, and went deep into the wood before they stopped to rest themselves. In the meanwhile, the hound led John of Lorn straight to the place where the King went into the water, but there the dog began to be puzzled, not knowing where to go next; for you are well aware that the running water could not retain the scent of a man's foot, like that which remains on turf. So John of Lorn seeing the dog was at fault, as it is called, that is, had lost the track of that which he pursued, gave up the chase, and returned to join with Aymer de Valence.

But King Robert's adventures were not yet ended. His foster-brother and he had rested themselves in the wood, but they had got no food, and were become extremely

hungry. They walked on however, in hopes of coming to some habitation. At length, in the midst of the forest, they met with three men who looked like thieves or ruffians. They were well armed, and one of them bore a sheep on his back, which it seemed as if they had just stolen. They saluted the King civilly; and he, replying to their salutation, asked them where they were going. The men answered, they were seeking for Robert Bruce, for that they intended to join with him. The King answered, that if they would go with him, he would conduct them where they would find the Scottish King. Then the man who had spoken, changed countenance, and Bruce, who looked sharply at him, began to suspect that the ruffian guessed who he was, and that he and his companions had some design against his person in order to gain the reward which had been offered for his life. So he said to them, "My good friends, as we are not well acquainted with each other, you must go before us, and we will follow near to you."

"You have no occasion to suspect any harm from us," answered the man.

"Neither do I suspect any," said Bruce; "but this is the way in which I choose to travel."

The men did as he commanded, and thus they travelled till they came together to a waste and ruinous cottage, where the men proposed to dress some part of the sheep which their companion was carrying. The King was glad to hear of food; but he insisted that there should be two fires kindled, one for himself and his foster-brother at one end of the house, the other at the other end for their three companions. The men did as he desired. They broiled a quarter of mutton for themselves, and gave another to the King and his attendant. They were obliged to eat it without bread or salt; but as they were very hungry, they were glad to get food in any shape, and partook of it very heartily.

Then so heavy a drowsiness fell on King Robert, that, for all the danger he was in, he could not resist an inclination to sleep. But first, he desired his foster-brother to watch while he slept, for he had great suspicion of their new acquaintances. His foster-brother promised to keep awake, and did his best to keep his word. But the King had not been long asleep ere his foster-brother fell into a deep slumber also, for he had undergone as much fatigue as the King. When the three villains saw the King and his attendant asleep, they made signs to each other, and rising up at once, drew their swords with the purpose to kill them both. But the King slept but lightly, and for as little noise as the traitors made in rising, he was awakened by it, and starting up, drew his sword, and went to meet them. At the same moment he pushed his foster-brother with his foot, to awaken him, and he got on his feet; but ere he got his eyes cleared to see what was about to happen, one of the ruffians that were advancing to slay the King, killed him with a stroke of his sword. The King was now alone, one man against three, and in the greatest danger of his life; but his amazing strength, and the good armour which he wore, freed him once more from this great peril, and he killed the three men, one after another.

He then left the cottage, very sorrowful for the death of his faithful foster-brother, and took his direction towards the place where he had appointed his men to assemble after their dispersion. It was now near night, and the place of meeting being a farm-house, he went boldly into it, where he found the mistress, an old true-hearted Scotswoman, sitting alone. Upon seeing a stranger enter, she asked him who and what he was. The King answered that he was a traveller, who was journeying through the country.

“All travellers,” answered the good woman, “are welcome here, for the sake of one.”

“And who is that one,” said the King, “for whose sake you make all travellers welcome?”

“It is our rightful king, Robert the Bruce,” answered the mistress, “who is the lawful lord of this country; and although he is now pursued and hunted after with hounds and horns, I hope to live to see him King over all Scotland.”

“Since you love him so well, dame,” said the King, “know that you see him before you. I am Robert the Bruce.”

XXVI.

BANNOCKBURN.

SCOTT.

[After years of this wandering life the Scots gathered again round Bruce, and little by little he won back the land from the English till only Stirling was left in their hands. Edward the Second, a weak and bad king, resolved to save this castle; and led a great army to its relief. Bruce met it at Bannockburn, on the plain in front of Stirling, and his victory established Scottish freedom.]

BRUCE studied how he might supply, by address and stratagem, what he wanted in numbers and strength. He knew the superiority of the English both in their heavy-armed cavalry, which were much better mounted and armed than that of the Scots, and in their archers, who were better trained than any others in the world. Both these advantages he resolved to provide against. With this purpose, he led his army down into a plain near Stirling, called the Park, near which, and beneath it, the English army must needs pass through a boggy country, broken with

water-courses, while the Scots occupied hard dry ground. He then caused all the ground upon the front of his line of battle, where cavalry were likely to act, to be dug full of holes, about as deep as a man's knee. They were filled with light brushwood, and the turf was laid on the top, so that it appeared a plain field, while in reality it was as full of these pits as a honeycomb is of holes. He also, it is said, caused steel spikes, called calthrops, to be scattered up and down in the plain, where the English cavalry were most likely to advance, trusting in that manner to lame and destroy their horses.

When the Scottish army was drawn up, the line stretched north and south. On the south, it was terminated by the banks of the brook called Bannockburn, which are so rocky that no troops could attack them there. On the left, the Scottish line extended near to the town of Stirling. Bruce reviewed his troops very carefully; all the useless servants, drivers of carts, and such like, of whom there were very many, he ordered to go behind a height, afterwards, in memory of the event, called the Gillies' hill, that is, the Servants' hill. He then spoke to the soldiers, and expressed his determination to gain the victory, or to lose his life on the field of battle. He desired that all those who did not propose to fight to the last should leave the field before the battle began, and that none should remain except those who were determined to take the issue of victory or death, as God should send it.

When the main body of his army was thus placed in order, the King posted Randolph,¹ with a body of horse, near to the church of St. Ninian's, commanding him to use the utmost diligence to prevent any succours from being thrown into Stirling castle. He then despatched James of

¹ *His nephew Earl of Moray.*

Douglas,² and Sir Robert Keith, the Mareschal of the Scottish army, in order that they might survey, as nearly as they could, the English force, which was now approaching from Falkirk. They returned with information, that the approach of that vast host was one of the most beautiful and terrible sights which could be seen,—that the whole country seemed covered with men-at-arms on horse and foot,—that the number of standards, banners, and pennons (all flags of different kinds), made so gallant a show, that the bravest and most numerous host in Christendom might be alarmed to see King Edward moving against them.

It was upon the 23rd of June (1314) the King of Scotland heard the news that the English army were approaching Stirling. He drew out his army, therefore, in the order which had been resolved on. After a short time, Bruce, who was looking out anxiously for the enemy, saw a body of English cavalry trying to get into Stirling from the eastward. This was the Lord Clifford, who, with a chosen body of eight hundred horse had been detached to relieve the castle. "See, Randolph," said the King to his nephew, "there is a rose fallen from your chaplet." By this he meant, that Randolph had lost some honour, by suffering the enemy to pass where he had been stationed to hinder them. Randolph made no reply, but rushed against Clifford with little more than half his number. The Scots were on foot. The English turned to charge them with their lances, and Randolph drew up his men in close order to receive the onset. He seemed to be in so much danger, that Douglas asked leave of the King to go and assist him. The King refused him permission. "Let Randolph," he said, "redeem his own fault; I cannot break the order of battle for his sake." Still the danger appeared greater,

² *Sir James, the founder of the great house of Douglas.*

and the English horse seemed entirely to encompass the small handful of Scottish infantry. "So please you," said Douglas to the King, "my heart will not suffer me to stand idle and see Randolph perish—I must go to his assistance." He rode off accordingly; but long before they had reached the place of combat, they saw the English horses galloping off, many with empty saddles.

"Halt!" said Douglas to his men, "Randolph has gained the day; since we were not soon enough to help him in the battle, do not let us lessen his glory by approaching the field." Now, that was nobly done; especially as Douglas and Randolph were always contending which should rise highest in the good opinion of the King and the nation.

The van of the English army now came in sight, and a number of their bravest knights drew near to see what the Scots were doing. They saw King Robert dressed in his armour, and distinguished by a gold crown, which he wore over his helmet. He was not mounted on his great war-horse, because he did not expect to fight that evening. But he rode on a little pony up and down the ranks of his army, putting his men in order, and carried in his hand a sort of battle-axe made of steel. When the King saw the English horsemen draw near, he advanced a little before his own men, that he might look at them more nearly. There was a knight among the English, called Sir Henry de Bohun, who thought this would be a good opportunity to gain great fame to himself, and put an end to the war, by killing King Robert. The King being poorly mounted, and having no lance, Bohun galloped on him suddenly and furiously, thinking, with his long spear, and his tall powerful horse, easily to bear him down to the ground. King Robert saw him, and permitted him to come very near, then suddenly turned his pony a little to one side, so that

Sir Henry missed him with the lance-point, and was in the act of being carried past him by the career of his horse. But as he passed, King Robert rose up in his stirrups, and struck Sir Henry on the head with his battle-axe so terrible a blow, that it broke to pieces his iron helmet as if it had been a nut-shell, and hurled him from his saddle. He was dead before he reached the ground. This gallant action was blamed by the Scottish leaders, who thought Bruce ought not to have exposed himself to so much danger when the safety of the whole army depended on him. The King only kept looking at his weapon, which was injured by the force of the blow, and said, "I have broken my good battle-axe."

The next morning, being the 24th June, at break of day, the battle began in terrible earnest. The English as they advanced saw the Scots getting into line. The Abbot of Inchaffray walked through their ranks barefooted, and exhorted them to fight for their freedom. They kneeled down as he passed, and prayed to Heaven for victory. King Edward, who saw this, called out, "They kneel down—they are asking forgiveness." "Yes," said a celebrated English baron, called Ingelram de Umphraville, "but they ask it from God, not from us—these men will conquer, or die upon the field."

The English King ordered his men to begin the battle. The archers then bent their bows, and began to shoot so closely together, that the arrows fell like flakes of snow on a Christmas day. They killed many of the Scots, and might, as at Falkirk, and other places, have decided the victory; but Bruce, as I told you before, was prepared for them. He had in readiness a body of men-at-arms, well mounted, who rode at full gallop among the archers, and as they had no weapon save their bows and arrows, which they could not use when they were attacked hand to hand, they

were cut down in great numbers by the Scottish horsemen, and thrown into total confusion.

The fine English cavalry then advanced to support their archers, and to attack the Scottish line. But coming over the ground which was dug full of pits, the horses fell into these holes, and the riders lay tumbling about, without any means of defence, and unable to rise from the weight of their armour. The Englishmen began to fall into general disorder; and the Scottish King, bringing up more of his forces, attacked and pressed them still more closely.

On a sudden, while the battle was obstinately maintained on both sides, an event happened which decided the victory. The servants and attendants on the Scottish camp had, as I told you, been sent behind the army to a place afterwards called the Gillies' hill. But when they saw that their masters were likely to gain the day, they rushed from their place of concealment with such weapons as they could get, that they might have their share in the victory and in the spoil. The English, seeing them come suddenly over the hill, mistook this disorderly rabble for a new army coming up to sustain the Scots, and, losing all heart, began to shift every man for himself. Edward himself left the field as fast as he could ride. A valiant knight, Sir Giles de Argentine, much renowned in the wars of Palestine, attended the King till he got him out of the press of the combat. But he would retreat no farther. "It is not my custom," he said, "to fly." With that he took leave of the King, set spurs to his horse, and calling out his war-cry of Argentine! Argentine! he rushed into the thickest of the Scottish ranks, and was killed.

XXVII.

CHAUCER.

BROOKE.

[Bannockburn settled the question of Scotch independence, though the war lingered on into the reign of Edward the Second's successor, his son, Edward the Third. The reign of this King is one of the most memorable in our history. In spite of the troubles of Edward the Second's time, the great measures of Edward the First now did their work : and England, secure in the possession of a firm government, of unhindered justice, and of a national Parliament, sprang suddenly forward into one of the leading powers of the world. It won its first great victories, and it produced its first great singer. Geoffrey Chaucer is the noblest and most beautiful embodiment of his time. He was the son of a London vintner, born in 1340, who in youth became a page to the wife of one of the King's sons, and made a short campaign in France, when Edward was at the height of his glory. Chaucer's warlike career was luckless ; he was taken prisoner, ransomed, and returned to court to write versés after the fashion of the French poetry of the time, and, as some suppose, to love as lucklessly as he had fought. When he had reached thirty however his powers began to show themselves more nobly. In the twelve years from 1372 to 1384 he went for the King on some diplomatic missions ; and three of these were to Italy. This was the turning-point of his career ; contact with Italian poetry spurred Chaucer into himself becoming a great poet.]

At that time the great Italian literature, which inspired then, and still inspires, European literature, had reached full growth, and it opened to Chaucer a new world of art. If he read the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divina Commedia*

of Dante,¹ he knew for the first time the power and range of poetry. He read the Sonnets of Petrarca, and he learnt what is meant by "form" in poetry. He read the tales of Boccaccio, who made Italian prose,² and in them he first saw how to tell a story exquisitely. Petrarca and Boccaccio he may even have met, but he never saw Dante, who had died years before at Ravenna in 1321. When he came back from these journeys he was a new man. He threw aside the romantic poetry of France, and laughed at it in his gay and kindly manner in the *Rime of Sir Thopas*, which was afterwards made one of the *Canterbury Tales*. His chief work of this time bears witness to the influence of Italy. It was *Troylus and Creseide*, which is a translation, with many changes and additions, of the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio. The additions (and he nearly doubled the poem) are stamped with his own peculiar tenderness, vividness, and simplicity. His changes from the original are all towards the side of purity, good taste, and piety.

We meet the further influence of Boccaccio in the birth of some of the *Canterbury Tales*, and of Petrarca in the tales themselves. To this time is now referred the tale of the Second Nun, that of the Doctor, the Mar of Law, the Clerk, the Prioress, the Squire, the Franklin, Sir Thopas, and the first draft of the Knight's Tale borrowed with much freedom from the *Teseide* of Boccaccio. The other poems of this period were the *Parlament of Foules*,³ the *Compleynt of Mars*, *Anelida*, and *Arcite*,

¹ Dante was the first great Italian poet. His "Vita Nuova" is a prose account of his early life and love, with canzonets scattered throughout it. His "Divina Commedia" is a poem which tells of his journeying through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.

² Boccaccio's collection of tales was called the "Decameron."
³ Of birds. They gather and chat "in parliament."

Boece, and *The Former Age*, the *Lines to Adam Scrivener*, and the *Hous of Fame*. In the passion with which Chaucer describes the ruined love of Troilus and Anelida, some have traced the lingering sorrow of his early love affair. But if this be true, it was now passing away, for in the creation of Pandarus in the *Troilus*, and in the delightful fun of the *Parlament of Foules*, a new Chaucer appears, the humorous poet of the *Canterbury Tales*. In the active business life he led during this period he was likely to grow out of mere sentiment, for he was not only employed on service abroad, but also at home. In 1374 he was Comptroller of the Wool Customs,⁴ in 1382 of the Petty Customs, and in 1386 Member of Parliament for Kent.

It is in the next period, from 1384 to 1390, that Chaucer left behind Italian influence as he had left French, and became entirely himself, entirely English. The comparative poverty in which he now lived, and the loss of his offices, for in John of Gaunt's⁵ absence he lost Court favour, may have given him more time for study, and the retired life of a poet. At least in the *Legende of Good Women*, the prologue to which was written in 1385, we find him a closer student than ever of books and of nature. His appointment as Clerk of the Works in 1389 brought him again into contact with men. He superintended the repairs and building at the Palace of Westminster, the Tower, and St George's Chapel, Windsor, till July, 1391, when he was superseded, and lived on pensions allotted to him by Richard and by Henry IV., after he had sent that King in 1399 his *Complaint to his Purse*. Before

⁴ The "customs" or export duties on wool were then the most important sources of the King's revenue. ⁵ John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, had been Chaucer's patron in early life. He now lost power, and left England to seek for a crown in Spain, which he never gained.

1390, however, he had added to his great work its best tales, those of the Miller, the Reeve, the Cook, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant, the Friar, the Nun, Priest, Pardoner, and perhaps the Sompnour. The Prologue was probably written in 1388. In these, in their humour, in their vividness of portraiture, in their ease of narration, and in the variety of their characters, Chaucer shines supreme. A few smaller poems belong to his best time, such as *Truth* and the *Moder of God*. During the last ten years of his life, which may be called the period of his decay, he wrote some small poems, and along with the *Compleynte of Venus*, and a prose treatise on the Astrolabe, four more tales, the Canon's-yeoman's, Manciple's, Monk's and Parson's. The last was written the year of his death, 1400. Having done this work, he died in a house under the shadow of the Abbey of Westminster. Within the walls of the Abbey Church, the first of the poets who lies there, that "sacred and happy spirit" sleeps.

Born of the tradesman class, Chaucer was in every sense of the word one of our finest gentlemen; tender, graceful in thought, glad of heart, humorous, and satirical without unkindness; sensitive to every change of feeling in himself and others, and therefore full of sympathy; brave in misfortune, even to mirth, and doing well and with careful honesty all he undertook. His first and great delight was in human nature, and he makes us love the noble characters in his poems and feel with kindness towards the baser and ruder sort. He never sneers, for he had a wide charity, and we can always smile in his pages at the follies and forgive the sins of men. He had a true and chivalrous regard for women, and his wife and he must have been very happy if they fulfilled the ideal he had of marriage. He lived in aristocratic society, and yet he thought him the greatest gentleman who was "most

vertuous alway, privé, and pert (open), and most entendeth aye to do the gentil dedes that he can." He lived frankly among men, and as we have seen, saw many different types of men, and in his own time filled many parts as a man of the world and of business. Yet, with all this active and observant life, he was commonly very quiet and kept much to himself. The Host in the Tales japes at him for his lonely, abstracted air. "Thou lookest as thou wouldest find a hare, And ever on the ground I see thee stare."

Being a good scholar, he read morning and night alone, and he says that after his (office) work he would go home and sit at another book as dumb as a stone, till his look was dazed. While at study, and when he was making of songs and ditties, "nothing else that God had made" had any interest for him. There was but one thing that roused him then, and that too he liked to enjoy alone. It was the beauty of the morning and the fields, the woods, and streams, and flowers, and the singing of the little birds. This made his heart full of revel and solace, and when spring came after winter, he rose with the lark and cried, "Farewell my book and my devotion." He was the first who made the love of nature a distinct element in our poetry. He was the first who, in spending the whole day gazing alone on the daisy, set going that lonely delight in natural scenery which is so special a mark of our later poets. He lived thus a double life, in and out of the world, but never a gloomy one. For he was fond of mirth and good living, and when he grew towards age was portly of waist, "no poppet to embrace." But he kept to the end his elvish countenance,⁶ the shy, delicate, half-mischievous face which looked on men from its grey hair and forked beard, and was set off by his dark-coloured dress and hood.

⁶ *Elves were small fairy-folk.*

A knife and inkhorn hung on his dress, we see a rosary in his hand, and when he was alone he walked swiftly.

Of his work it is not easy to speak briefly, because of its great variety. Enough has been said of it, with the exception of his most complete creation, the *Canterbury Tales*. It will be seen from the dates given above that they were not written at one time. They are not, and cannot be looked on as a whole. Many were written independently, and then fitted into the framework of the Prologue in 1388. At that time a number more were written, and the rest added at intervals till his death. In fact, the whole thing was done much in the same way as Mr. Tennyson has written his *Idylls of the King*. The manner in which he knitted them together was very simple and likely to please English people. The holiday excursions of the time were the pilgrimages, and the most famous and the pleasantest pilgrimage to go, especially for Londoners, was the three or four days' journey to see the shrine of St. Thomas⁷ at Canterbury. Persons of all ranks in life met and travelled together, starting from a London inn. Chaucer seized on this as the frame in which to set his pictures of life. He grouped around the jovial host of the Tabard Inn men and women of every class of society in England, set them on horseback to ride to Canterbury, and made each of them tell a tale.

No one could hit off a character better, and in his Prologue, and in the prologues to the several Tales, the whole of the new, vigorous English society which had grown up since Edward I. is painted with astonishing vividness. "I see all the pilgrims in the Canterbury Tales," says Dryden, "their humours, their features, and their very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with

⁷ *Thomas Becket, who after his death became the most popular of English saints.*

them at the Tabard in Southwark." The Tales themselves take in the whole range of the poetry of the middle ages; the legend of the saint, the romance of the knight, the wonderful fables of the traveller, the coarse tale of common life, the love story, the allegory, the satirical lay, and the apologue. And they are pure tales. He has been said to have had dramatic power, but he has none. He is simply our greatest story-teller in verse. All the best tales are told easily, sincerely, with great grace, and yet with so much homeliness, that a child would understand them. Sometimes his humour is broad, sometimes sly, sometimes gay, sometimes he brings tears into our eyes, and he can make us smile or be sad as he pleases.

He had a very fine ear for the music of verse, and the tale and the verse go together like voice and music. Indeed, so softly flowing and bright are they, that to read them is like listening in a meadow full of sunshine to a clear stream rippling over its bed of pebbles. The English in which they are written is almost the English of our time; and it is literary English. Chaucer made our tongue into a true means of poetry. He did more, he welded together the French and English elements in our language and made them into one English tool for the use of literature, and all our prose writers and poets derive their tongue from the language of the *Canterbury Tales*. They give him honour for this, but still more for that he was the first English artist. Poetry is an art, and the artist in poetry is one who writes for pure pleasure and for nothing else the thing he writes, and who desires to give to others the same fine pleasure by his poems which he had in writing them. The thing he most cares about is that the form in which he puts his thoughts or feelings may be perfectly fitting to the subject, and as beautiful as possible—but for this he cares very greatly; and in this Chaucer stands apart from the other poets

of his time. Gower wrote with a moral object, and nothing can be duller than the form in which he puts his tales. The author of *Piers the Ploughman* wrote with the object of reform in social and ecclesiastical affairs, and his form is uncouth and harsh. Chaucer wrote because he was full of emotion and joy in his own thoughts, and thought that others would weep and be glad with him, and the only time he ever moralizes is in the Tales of the Yeoman and the Manciple, written in his decay. He has, then, the best right to the poet's name. He is our first English artist.

XXVIII.

CRESSY.

MISS YONGE.

[While Chaucer was singing, England was winning a warlike fame such as it had never known. The war with Scotland had brought with it a quarrel with the French kings, who saw in the struggle of England with the Scotch an opportunity for getting hold of Aquitaine, the only English possession left in France. To meet this Edward the Third laid claim to the crown of France itself, in right of his mother, who was the daughter of a French king. So began a war which was to last more than a hundred years. At first Edward had small success; as he trusted in foreign soldiers and foreign princes whom he hired with money; but at last he threw himself on England alone, landed with an English army in Normandy, and marched upon Paris. He was forced however to fall back, and was pursued by the King of France, Philippe of Valois, as far as the Somme, where he was all but cut off. Luckily he found a ford, and was able to get across into the province of Ponthieu, where he encamped at the village of Creci or Cressy.]

EDWARD had encamped at the village of Creci, when, on Friday afternoon, the 25th of August, 1346, he learnt that the French army had crossed by the bridge of Abbeville. "Let us post ourselves here," he said. "We will go no further till we have seen our enemies. I have good reason to wait for them here, for I am on the lawful inheritance of my lady mother."¹ Then giving his men orders to be in readiness for battle on the morrow, he gave a supper in his tent to the earls and knights, where they made good cheer; but he dismissed them early, and repairing to his oratory, knelt before the altar, entreating that if he should give battle the next day he might come off with honour. At midnight he went to rest, but, rising early, he and his son² heard mass and communicated, as did most of the troops. Brave as they were, it was an anxious moment, for their numbers were but an eighth of those of the French; and be it remembered that this was only the first of the long series of battles which afterwards established the Englishman's almost overweening confidence of victory.

Whether it was because Edward wished that his son should have the full honour of his first battle, or that he desired to obviate the mischief to England of his death while his children were young, or that he feared Philippe would again balk him of his conflict should the two monarchs both command in person, he placed the first division under the command of the Prince of Wales, assisted by the Earl of Warwick and Sir Godfrey de Harcourt. It consisted of 800 men-at-arms, 2,000 archers, and 1,000 Welshmen; with them were certain new machines,³ never yet used in battle, though

¹ *Ponthieu had been given at her marriage to his mother, Isabella of France.* ² *Prince Edward, called the Black Prince, from the colour of his armour.* ³ *Cressy was the first battle where guns and gunpowder were used. They had been used before in sieges.*

in sieges proof had sometimes been made of Friar Bacon's invention.⁴ The next division, under the Earl of Northampton, amounted to 800 men-at-arms⁵ and 1,200 archers; and the reserve, which the King kept highest up on the hill in the rear, was of the same number. Edward then mounted a small palfrey, and with a white wand in his hand, rode along the ranks, accompanied by his two marshals, the Earl of Warwick and Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, going at a foot's pace, encouraging and entreating his troops so sweetly, and with so cheerful a countenance, that all took heart. By this time it was ten o'clock, and he returned to his own division, bidding his men dine heartily, and drink a glass after, in which matter they willingly obeyed him. They then packed up their cooking apparatus, returned to their places, and all sat down in their order, sheltering themselves as best they might from the showers, with their helmets and bows laid beside them, that they might be in full force and vigour when the enemy should appear.

No such precautions had been taken by Philippe de Valois.⁶ He put his trust in the imposing array of names and huge numbers that he had collected. He had with him the King of Bohemia,⁷ who, blind as he was, could not endure to miss a battle; his son, Charles of Luxemburg; Jayme, King of Majorca, of the House of Arragon; the Duke of Lorraine; the Count of Flanders; and Sir John of Hainault,⁸ Edward's old friend and master in the art of war; 8,000 knights and

⁴ Bacon, a Franciscan friar, first mentions the composition of gunpowder, which he may have invented. ⁵ Men-at-arms were knights and their mounted followers, squires, and "lances," as they were called. ⁶ The French king. ⁷ John of Luxemburg, who with his son Charles, a claimant of the Empire, were on the French border at the time of Edward's advance on Paris, and came to its relief. ⁸ Edward had married Philippa, daughter of the Count of Hainault. Her uncle, John, had helped Edward in his wars with the Scots.

60,000 infantry, a sixth part of whom were Genoese⁹ cross-bowmen, reputed the best sailors and the best archers. Early in the morning he heard mass at Abbeville, and set forth at sunrise, under a heavy fall of rain ; all the nobles setting out, each man on his own account, without any concerted plan, except that some one advised him to halt the cavalry and let the foot go forward, lest they should be trampled down by the horses. Four nobles then galloped forward to reconnoitre, and returning, with difficulty pushed through the crowds, and told the King how fresh and vigorous the English looked, strongly advising him to wait where he was for the night, and get his troops into better array, instead of attacking while they were wearied and disorganized by their disorderly march.

Philippe had sense enough to consent, and his marshals rode about, shouting, "Halt, banners, in the name of St. Denis!"¹⁰ but no one had any notion of attending. The fiery gentlemen thought their honour concerned in going as near the foe as possible ; so the hindmost declared they would not stop till they were even with the front ; the front pushed on to be before them, till they came in sight of the dark-green ranks of yeomen, sitting in good order upon the hill of Creci ; whereupon they all came to a sudden stand, and fell back, so that those in the rear thought the fight had begun, and pressed forward or hung back, according to the condition of their nerves ; while the common people, who choked up the roads, valiantly drew their swords and shouted, "Kill, kill !" and the nobles left behind struggled to force their way through them ; so that no one who had not been present could conceive the bad management and disorder of that day.

⁹ *From the Riviera, or shore of the Gulf of Genoa, all which Genoa ruled. France had hired them to match the English archers.*

¹⁰ *The patron saint of France.*

The King was pushed forward unwillingly, until, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, he came in sight of the English, when his blood was stirred, for he bitterly hated them, and he called out to his marshals, "Send forward the Genoese, and begin the battle!" The unfortunate Genoese had marched eighteen miles in heavy rain, under their armour, and carrying their crossbows; and they told the Constable d'Eu that their strings were limp, and they were in no state to do good service. Out broke the Count d'Alençon in a passion, "This comes of cumbering ourselves with a ribald crew, who always fail in time of need!" And the two Genoese admirals, Doria and Grimaldi, men as noble and as proud as himself, and far more skilful, were forced to do their best to confute the taunt by arraying their men as well as they could, while an August thunderstorm was raging overhead, the blackness increased by a solar eclipse, and the crows and ravens, whose strange instinct scented the battle, screaming and flapping about in the torrents of rain and hail.

The English yeomen meanwhile quietly rose up, each man in his place, so that as they stood their battalions took the form of a harrow, in squares like a chessboard. Each donned his steel cap, and drew his bowstring from the case where it had been kept dry; and at that moment the cloud began to roll off, leaving a clear sky towards the west, so that the sun broke cheerfully out with strong, clear beams, which fell on the backs of the English, but dazzled and blinded the eyes of their adversaries.

The Genoese were by this time in order, and "leapt forward with a fell cry," hoping to frighten their enemies, as no doubt they had often done to unwarlike Italian citizens; but finding the English stood still and paid no attention they hooted again and came forward; then, with a third cry, discharged such of their crossbows as were not too

damp to use. Then, thick as snow, came the arrows from the longbows, piercing heads and arms, and through cuirasses; and mingled with these came large balls of iron, propelled from the hill above with sounds like the retreating thunder of the storm, doing deadly execution, and terrifying men and horses. The Genoese gave back; but behind them were the brilliant and impatient knights, wild to press forwards; and finding the way encumbered, Philippe shouted the barbarous order, "Kill me those rascals, who block our way without reason!" and the unhappy Italians were actually cut down and trampled upon on all sides by the very men in whose cause they were fighting. But when the French came within the flight of those deadly shafts, they brooked them as little as did the Genoese; their horses capered and curveted, and became unmanageable, and the wild Welshmen,¹¹ rushing down with their knives, mingled themselves with the disordered French, and killed a great number. The old King of Bohemia, hearing the cries around, desired to know where his son Charles was, and was told that he was not at hand, but was probably fighting elsewhere. "Sirs," cried the old man, "do me this favour—to lead me where I may strike one stroke!" Two of his knights thereupon tied the bridles of their horses to his, and rode on either side of him into the fray; and there all three bravely died together: while Charles, who had by no means such a taste for fighting as his father, rode safely out of the battle; "and I do not know which road he took," scornfully observes Froissart.¹²

There were French enough left to draw into some sort of order, with the Counts of Alençon and Flanders; and they made a formidable charge, the King trying constantly to get to where he saw flying the banners of the English cavalry,

¹¹ *Edward had brought footmen from Wales in his army.*

¹² *A canon of Liège, who wrote the story of these times.*

but there was always a hedge of archers before him. One large body, however, broke through the archers, and had so fierce a conflict with the 800 knights of the first troop, that the second was forced to come to their assistance, and the Earl of Warwick sent Sir Thomas Norwich to the windmill where King Edward stood that whole day without his helmet, to ask him to bring up the reserve. "Is my son dead, or hurt, or to the earth felled?" asked Edward. "No, Sir; but he is full hardly matched; wherefore he hath need of your aid." "Now, Sir Thomas," replied the King, "return to him, and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me as long as my son is alive, for any adventure that falleth; and also tell them that I command them to suffer the boy to win his spurs, for, if God be pleased, I will that this day be his, and the honour thereof, and to them that be about him."

The danger had indeed been great, for young Edward was at one time unhorsed, and struck to the ground; but one of his loving Welsh knights who carried the great dragon standard threw it over him as he lay, and stood upon it till the enemy were forced back, for, as doubtless the eye of the King had discerned from his station at the top of the hill, this impetuous charge was unsupported. The numerous knights and men-at-arms of the French army could not struggle up to their comrades, impeded as they were by the Genoese striking right and left for their lives, and by the Welsh and Cornishmen, whose long knives did deadly execution. Some nobles fell into ditches, and were dragged out by their squires; and pages and squires were wandering about looking for their masters at the bottom of the hill; while on the slope the English chivalry¹³ had repulsed the dangerous charge of the two Counts, and were cutting down the best knights of France. Only sixty

¹³ *Knights.*

knights remained around King Philippe, and his standard-bearer was killed before his eyes ; a hot conflict took place for the possession of the precious Oriflamme,¹⁴ but it was ended by a gallant Frenchman, who leapt from his horse, ripped it from the shaft with his sword, wrapped it round his body, and rode off. Philippe's horse was killed under him by an arrow, and Sir John of Hainault remounted him, saying, "Sir, retreat while you have the opportunity; do not expose yourself so simply : if you have lost this battle you will win another time !" and laying hold of his bridle, he dragged him off the field in the dusk of the summer evening. On they galloped, only four other nobles with them, and the sounds of defeat and slaughter ringing in their ears, till darkness closed in upon them, and they came to the Castle of Broye, where the gates were closed and the drawbridge raised. The governor came out on the battlements, and demanded who called at such an hour. "Open, open, Governor," cried Philippe, "it is the fortune of France."

¹⁴ *The standard of France, kept at the abbey of St. Denis.*

READINGS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

PART II.

FROM CRESSY TO CROMWELL.



PROSE READINGS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

PART II.

I.

THE PEASANT RISING.

GREEN.

[The victory of Cressy was the first of a series of successes which placed England high among military powers and forced France by the Treaty of Bretigny to grant to Edward full sovereignty of Aquitaine and the possession of Calais. But war brought with it suffering : and both countries shared in the terrible scourge of the plague which was called the Black Death. To the suffering caused by war and pestilence was added at the close of Edward's reign the shame of defeat. While England was exhausted by its victories, France woke to a fresh energy, and refusing to fulfil the terms of peace, stripped Edward of all his conquests save Calais, and in union with Castille made herself mistress of the seas and ruined English commerce. Money was squandered in desperate efforts to regain the old supremacy in the field ; and the pressure of taxation drove England to despair. The death of Edward the Third left the crown to his grandson, a boy named Richard the Second ; and the country felt the weakness of the government in a general disorder. Still the war called for money ; and the Parliament were driven to raise money by a tax, not as of old on lands,

but on every man and woman personally, "by head," which was hence called a poll-tax. This was levied from people who had till now been free from taxation, and who were just awaking to the injustice of their state as "serfs," or bondsmen, bound to do service in labour on their lords' lands. A preacher named John Ball fanned the discontent into a temper of rebellion; and in 1381 the commons rose in the Peasant Revolt.]

As the spring went by quaint rimes passed through the country, and served as a summons to revolt. "John Ball," ran one, "greeteth you all, and doth for to understand he hath rung your bell. Now right and might, will and skill, God speed every dele."¹ "Help truth," ran another, "and truth shall help you! Now reigneth pride in price, and covetise² is counted wise, and lechery withouten shame, and gluttony withouten blame. Envy reigneth with treason, and sloth is take³ in great season. God do bote,⁴ for now is tyme!" We recognize Ball's hand in the yet more stirring missives of "Jack the Miller" and "Jack the Carter." "Jack Miller asketh help to turn his mill aright. He hath grounden small, small: the King's Son of Heaven he shall pay for all. Look thy mill go aright with the four sailes, and the post stand with steadfastness. With right and with might, with skill and with will; let might help right, and skill go before will, and right before might, so goeth our mill aright." "Jack Carter," ran the companion missive, "prays you all that ye make a good end of that ye have begun, and do well, and aye better and better: for at the even men heareth the day." "Falseness and guile," sang Jack Trewman, "have reigned too long, and truth hath been set under a lock, and falseness and guile reigneth in every stook. No man may come truth to, but if he sing 'si dedero.'⁵ True love is away that was so good, and clerks

¹ Part; i.e. every one's effort.

² Greed.

³ Held.

⁴ Help.

⁵ i.e. unless he gives bribes to the judges.

for wealth work them woe. God do bote, for now is time." In the rude jingle of these lines began for England the literature of political controversy; they are the first predecessors of the pamphlets of Milton and of Burke. Rough as they are, they express clearly enough the mingled passions which met in the revolt of the peasants; their longing for a right rule, for plain and simple justice; their scorn of the immorality of the nobles and the infamy of the court; their resentment at the perversion of the law to the cause of oppression.

From the eastern and midland counties the restlessness spread to all England south of the Thames. But the grounds of discontent varied with every district. The actual outbreak began on the 5th of June at Dartford,⁶ where a tiler killed one of the collectors of the poll-tax in vengeance for a brutal outrage on his daughter. The county at once rose in arms. Canterbury, where "the whole town was of their mind," threw open its gates to the insurgents who plundered the Archbishop's palace and dragged John Ball⁷ from his prison. A hundred thousand Kentishmen gathered round Walter Tyler of Essex and John Hales of Malling to march upon London. Their grievance was mainly a political one. Villeinage⁸ was unknown in Kent. As the peasants poured towards Blackheath indeed every lawyer who fell into their hands was put to death; "not till all these were killed would the land enjoy its old freedom again," the Kentishmen shouted as they fired the houses of the stewards and flung the rolls of the manor-courts⁹ into the flames. But this action can hardly have been due to anything more than sympathy with

⁶ In Kent.
seditions preaching.

⁷ He had been thrown into prison for
⁸ The state of the serf or villein, who
 was bound to labour for a lord and might not quit his lands

⁹ In which the services due by the villeins were entered.

the rest of the realm, the sympathy which induced the same men when pilgrims from the north brought news that John of Gaunt was setting free his bondmen to send to the Duke an offer to make him Lord and King of England. Nor was their grievance a religious one. Lollardry¹⁰ can have made little way among men whose grudge against the Archbishop of Canterbury sprang from his discouragement of pilgrimages. Their discontent was simply political; they demanded the suppression of the poll-tax and better government; their aim was to slay the nobles and wealthier clergy, to take the King into their own hands, and pass laws which should seem good to the Commons of the realm.

The whole population joined the Kentishmen as they marched along, while the nobles were paralyzed with fear. The young King¹¹—he was but a boy of sixteen—addressed them from a boat on the river; but the refusal of his Council under the guidance of Archbishop Sudbury to allow him to land kindled the peasants to fury, and with cries of "Treason" the great mass rushed on London. On the 13th of June its gates were flung open by the poorer artizans within the city, and the stately palace of John of Gaunt¹² at the Savoy, the new inn of the lawyers at the Temple, the houses of the foreign merchants, were soon in a blaze. But the insurgents, as they proudly boasted, were "seekers of truth and justice, not thieves or robbers," and a plunderer found carrying off a silver vessel from the sack of the Savoy was flung with his spoil into the flames. Another body of insurgents encamped at the same time to the east of the city. In Essex and the eastern counties the popular discontent was more social than political. The demands of the peasants were that bondage should be

¹⁰ *In Edward the Third's day John Wiclif had taught a new and reformed religion. His followers were called Lollards.*

¹¹ *Richard the Second.* ¹² *The Duke of Lancaster, the King's uncle, who was hated by the people.*

abolished, that tolls and imposts on trade should be done away with, that "no acre of land which is held in bondage or villeinage be held at higher rate than fourpence a year," in other words for a money commutation of all villein services.¹³ Their rising had been even earlier than that of the Kentishmen. Before Whitsuntide an attempt to levy the poll-tax gathered crowds of peasants together, armed with clubs, rusty swords, and bows. The royal commissioners who were sent to repress the tumult were driven from the field, and the Essex men marched upon London on one side of the river as the Kentishmen marched on the other. The evening of the thirteenth, the day on which Tyler entered the city, saw them encamped without its walls at Mile-end. At the same moment Highbury and the northern heights were occupied by the men of Hertfordshire and the villeins of St. Alban's, where a strife between abbot and town had been going on since the days of Edward the Second.

The royal Council with the young King had taken refuge in the Tower, and their aim seems to have been to divide the forces of the insurgents. On the morning of the fourteenth therefore Richard rode from the Tower to Mile-end¹⁴ to meet the Essex men. "I am your King and Lord, good people," the boy began with a fearlessness which marked his bearing throughout the crisis, "what will you?" "We will that you free us for ever," shouted the peasants, "us and our lands; and that we be never named nor held for serfs!" "I grant it," replied Richard; and he bade them go home, pledging himself at once to issue charters of freedom and amnesty. A shout of joy welcomed the promise. Throughout the day more than thirty clerks were busied writing letters of pardon and emancipation,¹⁵

¹³ *Services in labour due by the peasants to their lords.*

¹⁴ *On the eastern road out of London.*

¹⁵ *Freedom from serfdom.*

and with these the mass of the Essex men and the men of Hertfordshire withdrew quietly to their homes. But while the King was successful at Mile-end a terrible doom had fallen on the councillors he left behind him. Richard had hardly quitted the Tower when the Kentishmen who had spent the night within the city appeared at its gates. The general terror was shown ludicrously enough when they burst in and taking the panic-stricken knights of the royal household in rough horse-play by the beard promised to be their equals and good comrades in the days to come. But the horse-play changed into dreadful earnest when they found that Richard had escaped their grasp, and the discovery of Archbishop Sudbury and other ministers in the chapel changed their fury into a cry for blood. The Primate was dragged from his sanctuary and beheaded. The same vengeance was wreaked on the Treasurer and the Chief Commissioner for the levy of the hated poll-tax, the merchant Richard Lyons who had been impeached by the Good Parliament.

Richard meanwhile had ridden round the northern wall of the city to the Wardrobe near Blackfriars,¹⁶ and from this new refuge he opened his negotiations with the Kentish insurgents. Many of these dispersed at the news of the King's pledge to the men of Essex, but a body of thirty thousand still surrounded Wat Tyler when Richard on the morning of the fifteenth encountered that leader by a mere chance at Smithfield. Hot words passed between his train and the peasant chieftain, who advanced to confer with the King, and a threat from Tyler brought on a brief struggle in which the Mayor of London, William Walworth, struck him with his dagger to the ground. "Kill! kill!" shouted the crowd, "they have slain our captain!" But Richard faced the

¹⁶ *On the western side of London.*

Kentishmen with the same cool courage with which he faced the men of Essex. "What need ye, my masters?" cried the boy-king as he rode boldly up to the front of the bowmen. "I am your Captain and your King; Follow me!" The hopes of the peasants centred in the young sovereign; one aim of their rising had been to free him from the evil counsellors who, as they believed, abused his youth; and at his word they followed him with a touching loyalty and trust till he entered the Tower. His mother welcomed him within its walls with tears of joy. "Rejoice and praise God," Richard answered, "for I have recovered to-day my heritage which was lost and the realm of England!" But he was compelled to give the same pledge of freedom to the Kentishmen as at Mile-end, and it was only after receiving his letters of pardon and emancipation that the yeomen dispersed to their homes.

II.

AGINCOURT.

MICHELET.

[Richard's pledge was broken; the peasant revolt was put down with terrible bloodshed; and serfdom set up again. But the troubles of England went on; and though peace with France was won for a while, Richard's own misgovernment at last forced England to a general rising. He was driven from the throne; and his cousin Henry, the son of John of Gaunt, was made King in his stead as Henry the Fourth. Henry's whole reign was a struggle against treason and revolt; and it was not till the days of his son, Henry the Fifth, that England was again at peace. To strengthen his throne, Henry the Fifth revived the old quarrel with France; and landing in Normandy took

Harfleur with great loss and suffering. His weakened army then marched for Calais; but was overtaken on its way at Agincourt by the army of the French king, Charles the Sixth.]

THE two armies were strangely contrasted. On the French side might be seen three enormous squadrons, like three forests of lances, which in this narrow plain followed one another in order, and extended to a vast depth; in their front stood the Constable, the Princes, the Dukes of Orleans, of Bar, and of Alençon, the Counts of Nevers, of Eu, of Richemont, of Vendôme, a crowd of nobles, a dazzling rainbow of enamelled armour, of coats of arms, of banners, of horses strangely masked in steel and gold. The French had their archers too, men of the commons these; but where were they to be set? Every place was disposed of; no one would give up his post; people such as these archers would have been a blot on so noble a gathering. There were cannons too, but it does not seem that they were used; probably no more room could be found for them than for the bowmen. On the other side stood the English army. Its outer seeming was poor enough. The archers had no armour—often no shoes; they had wretched headpieces of boiled leather, or even of osier, guarded by a cross-piece of iron; the axes and hatchets hung at their belts gave them the look of carpenters. Many of these good workmen had loosed their belts to work the more easily, first to bend the bow, then to wield the axe, when time came for leaving behind them the line of sharpened stakes which protected their front and for hewing at the motionless masses which stood before them.

For strange, incredible as it may seem, it is certain that the French army could not move, either to fight or fly. In the after struggle the rear-guard alone made its escape. At the critical moment indeed of the battle, when old

Thomas of Erpingham, after putting the English army in array, threw up his staff in the air, and cried "Now strike!" while the English replied with a shout of ten thousand men, the French army, to their great surprise, remained immovable. Horses and horsemen all seemed enchanted or dead in their armour. In reality these great war-horses, under the weight of their heavy riders and of their huge caparisons of iron, had sunk deeply in the thick clay on which they stood; they were so firmly fixed that it was with difficulty that they disengaged themselves in an attempt to advance. But their advance was only step by step. The field was a mere swamp of tenacious mud. "The field was soft and cut up by the horses; it was almost impossible to draw one's feet out of the ground, so soft was it. Besides this," goes on the historian, Lefebvre, "the French were so loaded with harness that they could not go forward. In the first place, they were burdened with steel coats of mail long enough to reach below the knees, and very heavy, and below this mail they had harness on their legs, and above it harness of white, and helmets atop of all. Then they were so crowded together that none could lift their arms to strike the enemy, save those who were in the front rank." Another historian on the English side tells us that the French were arrayed thirty-two men deep, while the English stood but four men deep. This enormous depth of the French column was useless, for almost all who composed it were knights and horsemen, and the bulk of them were so far from being able to act that they never even saw what was going on in the front; while among the English every man had his share in the action. Of the fifty thousand Frenchmen in fact but two or three thousand had the power actively to engage with the eleven thousand Englishmen; or at least might have had the power, had their horses freed themselves from the mire.

To rouse these sluggish masses to action the English archers discharged thousands of arrows right at their faces. The iron-clad horsemen bowed their heads, or the arrows would have pierced the vizors of their helmets. Then, on either flank of the army, from Tramecourt and from Agincourt, two French squadrons, by dint of hard spurring, got clumsily into motion, and came on headed by two famous men at arms, Messire Cliquet de Brabant and Messire Guillaume de Sausure. But the first squadron, which came from Tramecourt, was suddenly riddled by the fire from a body of archers hidden in the wood on its flank; and neither the one squadron nor the other ever reached the English line. In fact, of twelve hundred men who charged but a hundred and twenty managed to dash themselves against the stakes on the English front. The bulk had fallen on the road, men and horses, as they floundered in the thick mud. And well had it been had all fallen, for those whose horses were wounded could no longer govern the maddened beasts, and they turned back to rush on the French ranks. Far from being able to open to let them pass, the advance-guard was, as has been seen, so thickly massed together that not a man could move; and one may conceive the fearful confusion that fell on the serried mass, the frightened horses plunging and backing through it, flinging down their riders, or crushing them into a mass of clashing iron. It was in the midst of this turmoil that the Englishmen fell on them. Quitting their front of stakes, throwing down bow and arrow, they came on at their ease, hatchet and axe, sword or loaded club in hand, to hew at the vast confused heap of men and horses. When, in all good time, they had finally made a clearance of the advance-guard, they advanced, with King Henry at their head, on the second line of battle behind it. It was perhaps at this moment that eighteen French gentlemen fell upon the

English king. They had vowed, it is said, to die or to dash his crown from his head ; one of them tore from it a fleur-de-lys ; but all perished on the spot. It was now at any rate that the Duke of Brabant hurried up to the fight. He came late enough ; but he was still in good time to die. The brave prince had left his men behind him ; he had not even put on his coat of arms ; in its stead he took his banner, made a hole in it, passed his head through the hole, and threw himself upon the English, who slew him in an instant. Only the rear-guard now remained, and this soon melted away. A crowd of French knights, dismounted, but lifted from the ground by their serving men, had withdrawn from the battle, and given themselves up to the English. At this moment word was brought to King Henry that a body of Frenchmen were pillaging his baggage, while he saw in the French rear-guard some Bretons or Gascons, who seemed about to turn back upon him. Fear seized him for a moment, especially when he saw his followers embarrassed with so great a number of captives ; and on the instant he gave orders that every man should kill his prisoner. Not a man obeyed. These soldiers without hose or shoes saw in their hands the greatest lords of France, and thought their fortunes already made. They were ordered in fact to ruin themselves. Then the King told off two hundred men to serve as butchers. It was an awful sight, says the historian, to see these poor disarmed folk, to whom quarter had just been given, and who now in cold blood were killed, beheaded, cut in pieces ! After all, the alarm was a false one. It was but some pillagers of the neighbourhood, people of Agincourt, who in spite of their master, the Duke of Burgundy, had profited by the occasion. He punished them severely, although they had drawn from the spoil a rich sword for his son.

III.

JOAN OF ARC.

GREEN.

[The victory of Agincourt led Henry to a series of campaigns which finally laid all northern France at his feet. He was pushing to the conquest of the south when his sudden death left the crowns of France and England to a child, Henry the Sixth; and the factions which disputed for power in his name long hindered his brother, the Duke of Bedford, from completing his work. Meanwhile France south of the Loire held loyally to Charles the Seventh, who was not crowned as King but known as the Dauphin; but Charles showed as yet little power or activity; and when Bedford at last sent a weak force to besiege Orleans, the key of southern France, he did little for its help. Help came, however, from a peasant-maiden, Jeanne Darc, or Joan of Arc.]

JEANNE DARC was the child of a labourer of Domremy, a little village in the neighbourhood of Vaucouleurs on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne. Just without the cottage where she was born began the great woods of the Vosges, where the children of Domremy drank in poetry and legend from fairy ring and haunted well, hung their flower garlands on the sacred trees, and sang songs to the "good people"¹ who might not drink of the fountain because of their sins. Jeanne loved the forest; its birds and beasts came lovingly to her at her childish call. But at home men saw nothing in her but "a good girl, simple and pleasant in her ways," spinning and sewing by her mother's side while the other girls went to the fields; tender to the

¹ *The Fairies.*

poor and sick, fond of church, and listening to the church-bell with a dreamy passion of delight which never left her. This quiet life was broken by the storm of war as it at last came home to Domremy. As the outcasts and wounded passed by the little village the young peasant girl gave them her bed and nursed them in their sickness. Her whole nature summed itself up in one absorbing passion: she 'had pity,' to use the phrase for ever on her lip, 'on the fair realm of France.' As her passion grew she recalled old prophecies that a maid from the Lorraine border should save the land; she saw visions; St. Michael appeared to her in a flood of blinding light, and bade her go to the help of the King and restore to him his realm. "Messire," answered the girl, "I am but a poor maiden; I know not how to ride to the wars, or to lead men-at-arms." The archangel returned to give her courage, and to tell her of "the pity" that there was in heaven for the fair realm of France.

The girl wept, and longed that the angels who appeared to her would carry her away, but her mission was clear. It was in vain that her father when he heard of her purpose swore to drown her ere she should go to the field with men-at-arms. It was in vain that the priest, the wise people of the village, the captain of Vaucouleurs, doubted, and refused to aid her. "I must go to the King," persisted the peasant girl, "even if I wear my limbs to the very knees." "I had far rather rest and spin by my mother's side," she pleaded with a touching pathos, "for this is no work of my choosing, but I must go and do it, for my Lord wills it." "And who," they asked, "is your Lord?" "He is God." Words such as these touched the rough captain at last: he took Jeanne by the hand and swore to lead her to the King. She reached Chinon² in the opening of March, but here too

² A castle south of the Loire, where Charles the Seventh held his Court.

she found hesitation and doubt. The theologians proved from their books that they ought not to believe her. "There is more in God's book than in yours," Jeanne answered simply. At last Charles himself received her in the midst of a throng of nobles and soldiers. "Gentle Dauphin," said the girl, "my name is Jeanne the Maid. The Heavenly King sends me to tell you that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims,³ and you shall be lieutenant of the Heavenly King who is the King of France."

Orleans had already been driven by famine to offers of surrender when Jeanne appeared in the French court, and a force was gathering under the Count of Dunois at Blois for a final effort at its relief. It was at the head of this force that Jeanne placed herself. The girl was in her eighteenth year, tall, finely formed, with all the vigour and activity of her peasant rearing, able to stay from dawn to nightfall on horseback without meat or drink. As she mounted her charger, clad in white armour from head to foot, with the great white banner studded with fleur-de-lys waving over her head, she seemed "a thing wholly divine, whether to see or hear." The ten thousand men-at-arms who followed her from Blois, rough plunderers whose only prayer was that of La Hire,⁴ "Sire Dieu, I pray you to do for La Hire what La Hire would do for you, were you captain-at-arms and he God," left off their oaths and foul living at her word and gathered round the altars on their march. Her shrewd peasant humour helped her to manage the wild soldiery, and her followers laughed over their camp-fires at an old warrior who had been so puzzled by her prohibition of oaths that she suffered him still to swear by his bâton. For in the midst of her enthusiasm her good sense never

³ *The crowning-place of the French kings, which was now in the hands of the foes of Charles, so that he could not be crowned there.*

⁴ *A noted captain of the time.*

left her. The people crowded round her as she rode along, praying her to work miracles, and bringing crosses and chaplets to be blest by her touch. "Touch them yourself," she said to an old Dame Margaret; "your touch will be just as good as mine."

But her faith in her mission remained as firm as ever. "The Maid prays and requires you," she wrote to Bedford, "to work no more distraction in France but to come in her company to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the Turk." "I bring you," she told Dunois, when he sallied out of Orleans to meet her after her two days' march from Blois, "I bring you the best aid ever sent to any one, the aid of the King of Heaven." The besiegers looked on overawed as she entered Orleans and, riding round the walls, bade the people shake off their fear of the forts which surrounded them. Her enthusiasm drove the hesitating generals to engage the handful of besiegers, and the enormous disproportion of forces at once made itself felt. Fort after fort was taken till only the strongest remained, and then the council of war resolved to adjourn the attack. "You have taken your counsel," replied Jeanne, "and I take mine." Placing herself at the head of the men-at-arms, she ordered the gates to be thrown open, and led them against the fort. Few as they were, the English fought desperately, and the Maid, who had fallen wounded while endeavouring to scale its walls, was borne into a vineyard, while Dunois sounded the retreat. "Wait a while!" the girl imperiously pleaded, "eat and drink! so soon as my standard touches the wall you shall enter the fort." It touched, and the assailants burst in. On the next day the siege was abandoned, and on the eighth of May the force which had conducted it withdrew in good order to the north.

In the midst of her triumph Jeanne still remained ~~the~~

pure, tender-hearted peasant girl of the Vosges. Her first visit as she entered Orleans was to the great church, and there, as she knelt at mass, she wept in such a passion of devotion that "all the people wept with her." Her tears burst forth afresh at her first sight of bloodshed and of the corpses strewn over the battle-field. She grew frightened at her first wound, and only threw off the touch of womanly fear when she heard the signal for retreat. Yet more womanly was the purity with which she passed through the brutal warriors of a mediæval camp. It was her care for her honour that led her to clothe herself in a soldier's dress. She wept hot tears when told of the foul taunts of the English, and called passionately on God to witness her chastity. "Yield thee, yield thee, Glasdale," she cried to the English warrior whose insults had been foulest as he fell wounded at her feet, "you called me harlot! I have great pity on your soul." But all thought of herself was lost in the thought of her mission. It was in vain that the French generals strove to remain on the Loire. Jeanne was resolute to complete her task, and while the English remained panic-stricken around Paris she brought Charles to march upon Rheims, the old crowning-place of the Kings of France. Troyes and Chalons submitted as she reached them, Rheims drove out the English garrison and threw open her gates to the King.

IV.

BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY.

KIRK.

[Joan fell at last into the hands of her enemies and was burned as a witch. But the impulse she had given roused France; and the English were driven at last not only from

their recent conquests but from their own possession of Aquitaine. Of all they had held in France Calais only remained to them. The shame of these defeats heightened the disorder in England itself, which sprang from the imbecility of Henry the Sixth, and the strife of factions about his throne. At last the Duke of York, who descended from an elder brother of John of Gaunt, disputed Henry's right to the crown, and claimed to be king. With this claim began the Wars of the Roses, as they were called, the Red Rose being the badge of Lancaster, the White Rose of York. The Duke, after some successes, was defeated and slain; but his son, aided by the Earl of Warwick, the mightiest of the English nobles, drove Henry from the throne and himself mounted it as Edward the Fourth. Quarrels however sprang up between Edward and Warwick; and at last Warwick was driven into exile. He returned to England, and Edward had himself to fly over sea, while Henry the Sixth was once more set on the throne; but a fresh landing of Edward in Yorkshire was followed by the defeat and death of Warwick, and by a new deposition of Henry. At the moment of Warwick's overthrow, Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, landed on the southern coast with her son and a body of French troops; and Edward at once marched against her. Margaret's aim was to gather an army, and to do this she pushed through the western counties up the Severn, while Edward hurried in pursuit.]

ON the morning of Thursday, the second of May,¹ the Yorkists² were at Malmesbury, the Lancastrians³ at Bristol. A line drawn between these two places would represent the southern base of a triangle of which the northern apex might be found either at Gloucester, at Tewkesbury, or at Worcester, according as the lines of march represented by the sides were more or less convergent. But since the more westerly line was somewhat longer than the others, it was necessary for the Lancastrians to gain at least a day's

¹ 1471.
army of Margaret.

² *The army of Edward the Fourth.*

³ *The*

start in advance. To effect this object they again made a feint of offering battle, sending a small party to Sodbury, midway between Bristol and Malmesbury, to fix upon convenient ground for receiving the attack. Again Edward allowed himself to be momentarily deceived. He marched to Sodbury on the evening of the same day, and having selected his position, remained there during the night. Early in the morning, thanks to the vigilance of his spies, he discovered his error. The Lancastrians having travelled all night up the bank of the Severn, were now at Berkeley, far on the road to Gloucester. To intercept them with his army before they should reach this latter point was no longer possible ; and if they gained possession of the town,⁴ which was strongly fortified, they would be sheltered from an immediate attack, and would hold an excellent position for awaiting the expected succours from Wales and other quarters. There was still time however for a well-mounted party to carry notice of the enemy's approach to Richard Beauchamp, the newly appointed governor of Gloucester castle ; and having despatched this warning the King set out with his whole army, by the nearest route to Tewkesbury, whither the Lancastrians, if they failed to enter Gloucester, would necessarily proceed, and where he trusted to come up with them.

Thus the two hostile armies were now marching in the same direction, on concentric lines, and the trial was one of endurance and of speed. The day was "right an hot" one for the season ; on neither route were there any villages ; and the soldiers of Edward travelled more than thirty miles without any other refreshment for themselves or their horses than was afforded by the waters of a single brook, "where was full little relief, it was so soon troubled with the carriages that had passed it." They had, however, two

⁴ *Of Gloucester.*

advantages over the enemy. A much larger proportion of their force consisted of cavalry, and their course lay across the Cotswold, an open and level, though elevated tract of country, while that of the Lancastrians led through lanes and woods, which offered many obstructions to their progress. They lost some time moreover in a vain attempt to enter Gloucester, where, though the inhabitants were friendly to them, the governor was successful in preventing their admission.

During the latter part of the day the distance between them and their pursuers was rapidly diminished, and the enemy's scouts began to swarm along their flank. Nevertheless, they reached Tewkesbury somewhat earlier in the evening than Edward arrived at Cheltenham, then a mere village five miles to the south-east. But all hope of making good their escape was now past. They had been on the road the whole of the preceding night, had marched since the morning a distance of thirty-six miles, and were incapable of any further advance till thoroughly refreshed by food and sleep. Here, therefore, they must stand at bay; and their leaders made choice of a position well adapted to their purpose on the hills sloping southward from the town. The ancient Saxon abbey, with its magnificent Norman church, was "at their backs; afore them, and upon every hand of them, foul lanes and deep dikes, and many hedges, with hills and valleys, a right evil place to approach as could well have been devised."

Being apprised of the enemy's intention to receive battle, Edward, after a short delay at Cheltenham, led his army two miles further towards Tewkesbury, and halted for the night. At break of day his troops were again under arms. He gave the command of the vanguard to his brother Richard,⁵ Duke of Gloucester, then only nineteen years of

⁵ *Afterwards Richard the Third.*

age; the rear-guard was intrusted to Lord Hastings; while the rest of the forces were led by the king in person, with the exception of a small detachment sent forward to the edge of a wood, in case an ambush had been set for an assault upon his flank. Trumpets were blown, banners unfurled, and the aid and protection of the Almighty, the Virgin Mother, the blessed martyr Saint George, and all the Saints, solemnly invoked. The cannon then opened their fire; and the whole army advanced to the attack, the lines of bowmen in front sending forth a continual flight of arrows. The Lancastrians, had they been content to avail themselves of the advantages of their position, waiting till their assailants had crossed the fences and ditches and begun to gather on the rising ground, might then by a vigorous repulse have thrown them into confusion, where confusion must have ended in rout. But they were now to experience the usual ill-effects of a divided command. It was easy for the different chiefs to stimulate by their exhortations and example the courage of their men; but there was no one to direct or restrain the ardour of the chiefs. The Prince of Wales⁶ was too young to exercise any real authority. Yet his presence, and that of his mother,⁷ who had ridden through the ranks to animate the spirits of the troops, and who did not retire from the field till the battle had begun, was perhaps the reason for not investing any subject leader with the sole command.

However this may have been, the Duke of Somerset, whose force was posted in the front, led away either by his own impatient valour or by the restlessness of his men under the fire of the artillery and the archers, determined to leave his vantage-ground and come at once to an encounter with the enemy. He is even said to have cloven with his battle-axe the skull of one of his associates, Lord

⁶ *The son of Henry the Sixth.*

⁷ *Margaret of Anjou.*

Wenlock, who opposed this rash design. Descending by a slanting course through "certain paths and ways" which he had before reconnoitred, he entered an enclosed field, and falling suddenly on one end of the enemy's lines gained a slight advantage. But the Yorkists speedily rallied. Fresh bodies came pouring to their aid. The assailants were pushed back up the hill, and were now, in their turn, taken in flank by the party which, as already mentioned, had been detached by Edward to guard against a surprise. They were soon in complete disorder. The trees and bushes, the fences, the obscure paths, which had favoured the suddenness of their advance, became obstacles to their retreat. They threw away their arms and fled in different directions. But without spending time in the pursuit, the king, uniting all his forces in a solid mass, charged, with resistless vigour, the main body of the Lancastrians, whose already wavering lines were at once broken by the shock. "Such as abode handstrokes were slain incontinent." But more were slaughtered in the chase, "flying towards the town, to the abbey, to the church;" while not a few, hotly pursued, were drowned in a mill-stream that flowed through a neighbouring meadow, which has retained to this day the name of the "Bloody Field."

V.

CAXTON.

GREEN.

[With the battle of Tewkesbury the cause of the House of Lancaster was finally lost. Margaret was taken prisoner; her son was slain; Henry the Sixth himself died soon after in the Tower. From this moment Edward's reign was a peaceful one. He was an able ruler; but the chief glory of his reign springs from the introduction during it into England of the art of printing by William Caxton.]

It was probably at the press of Colard Mansion, in a little room over the porch of St. Donat's at Bruges,¹ that William Caxton learned the art which he was the first to introduce into England. A Kentish boy by birth, but apprenticed to a London mercer, Caxton had already spent thirty years of his manhood in Flanders as Governor of the English gild of Merchant Adventurers there when we find him engaged as copyist in the service of Edward's sister, Duchess Margaret of Burgundy.² But the tedious process of copying was soon thrown aside for the new art which Colard Mansion had introduced into Bruges. "For as much as in the writing of the same," Caxton tells us in the preface to his first printed work, the *Tales of Troy*, "my pen is worn, my hand is weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with over much looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address to them as hastily as I might the said book, therefore I have practised and learned at my great charge and dispense to ordain this said book in print after the manner and form as ye may see, and is not written with pen and ink as other books be,³ to the end that every man may have them at once, for all the books of this story here emprinted as ye see were begun in one day and also finished in one day."

The printing-press was the precious freight he brought back to England in 1476, after an absence of five-and-thirty years. Through the next fifteen, at an age when other men look for ease and retirement, we see him plunging with

¹ *In Flanders.* ² *The wife of Duke Charles the Bold.*

³ *Till now all books had been written by hand; hence they were called manuscripts. This process was tedious and costly; and so books were scarce and dear.*

characteristic energy into his new occupation. His "red pale," or heraldic shield, marked with a red bar down the middle, invited buyers to the press he established in the Almonry at Westminster, a little enclosure containing a chapel and almshouses near the west front of the church, where the alms of the abbey were distributed to the poor. "If it please any man, spiritual or temporal," runs his advertisement, "to buy any pyes⁴ of two or three commemorations of Salisbury all empyrnted after the form of the present letter, which be well and truly correct, let him come to Westminster into the Almonry at the red pale, and he shall have them good chepe." Caxton was a practical man of business, as this advertisement shows, no rival of the Venetian Aldi, or of the classical printers of Rome, but resolved to get a living from his trade, supplying priests with service books and preachers with sermons, furnishing the clerk with his "Golden Legend" and knight and baron with "joyous and pleasant histories of chivalry."

But while careful to win his daily bread, he found time to do much for what of higher literature lay fairly to hand. He printed all the English poetry of any moment which was then in existence. His reverence for that "worshipful man, Geoffrey Chaucer," who "ought to be eternally remembered," is shown not merely by his edition of the "Canterbury Tales," but by his reprint of them when a purer text of the poem offered itself. The poems of Lydgate and Gower were added to those of Chaucer. The Chronicle of Brut and Higden's "Polychronicon" were the only available works of an historical character then existing in the English tongue, and Caxton not only printed them but himself continued the latter up to his own time. A translation of Boethius, a version of the Eneid from the French, and a

⁴ *Books in small type.*

tract or two of Cicero, were the stray first-fruits of the classical press in England.

Busy as was Caxton's printing-press, he was even busier as a translator than as a printer. More than four thousand of his printed pages are from works of his own rendering. The need of these translations shows the popular drift of literature at the time ; but keen as the demand seems to have been, there is nothing mechanical in the temper with which Caxton prepared to meet it. A natural, simple-hearted taste and enthusiasm, especially for the style and forms of language, breaks out in his curious prefaces. "Having no work in hand," he says in the preface to his *Eneid*, "I sitting in my study where as lay many divers pamphlets and books, happened that to my hand came a little book in French, which late was translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France—which book is named *Eneydos*, and made in Latin by that noble poet and great clerk *Vergyl*—in which book I had great pleasure by reason of the fair and honest termes and wordes in French which I never saw to-fore-like,⁵ none so pleasant nor so well ordered, which book as me seemed should be much requisite for noble men to see, as well for the eloquence as for the histories ; and when I had advised me to this said book I deliberated and concluded to translate it into English, and forthwith took a pen and ink and wrote a leaf or twain."

But the work of translation involved a choice of English which made Caxton's work important in the history of our language. He stood between two schools of translation, that of French affectation and English pedantry. It was a moment when the character of our literary tongue was being settled, and it is curious to see in his own words the struggle over it which was going on in Caxton's time. "Some honest and great clerks have been with me and desired me to write

⁵ *Before.*

the most curious terms that I could find ;” on the other hand, “some gentlemen of late blamed me, saying that in my translations I had over many curious terms which could not be understood of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations.” “Fain would I please every man,” comments the good-humoured printer, but his sturdy sense saved him alike from the temptations of the court and the schools. His own taste pointed to English, but “to the common terms that be daily used” rather than to the English of his antiquarian advisers. “I took an old book and read therein, and certainly the English was so rude and broad I could not well understand it,” while the Old-English charters which the Abbot of Westminster lent as models from the archives of his house seemed “more like to Dutch⁶ than to English.”

To adopt current phraseology however was by no means easy at a time when even the speech of common talk was in a state of rapid flux. “Our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born.” Not only so, but the tongue of each shire was still peculiar to itself and hardly intelligible to men of another county. “Common English that is spoken in one shire varieth from another so much, that in my days happened that certain merchants were in a ship in Thames for to have sailed over the sea into Zealand, and for lack of wind they tarried at Foreland⁷ and went on land for to refresh them. And one of them, named Sheffield, a mercer, came into a house and asked for meat, and especially he asked them after eggs. And the good wife answered that she could speak no French. And the merchant was angry, for he also could speak no French, but would have eggs, but she understood him not. And then at last another said he would have eyren, then the good wife said she understood him well.

⁶ i.e. *German*.

⁷ *On the coast of Kent*.

Lo! what should a man in these days now write," adds the puzzled printer, "eggs or eyren? certainly it is hard to please every man by cause of diversity and change of language." His own mother-tongue too was that of "Kent in the Weald, where I doubt not is spoken as broad and rude English as in any place in England;" and coupling this with his long absence in Flanders we can hardly wonder at the confession he makes over his first translation, that "when all these things came to fore me, after that I had made and written a five or six quires, I fell in despair of this work, and purposed never to have continued therein, and the quires laid apart, and in two years after laboured no more in this work."

VI.

BATTLE OF BOSWORTH.

YONGE.

[Caxton's work shows how fast England was progressing in knowledge amidst all the troubles of the time. But the Wars of the Roses were still not at an end. At Edward the Fourth's death his brother murdered Edward's sons and seized the throne as Richard the Third. He was at first popular, but his cruelty and faithlessness soon estranged men from him; and Henry Tudor, who had inherited the claims of the House of Lancaster, landed in Wales, to dispute the crown, and boldly marched on London. Richard, suspicious of the treachery which was to ruin him, marched to intercept Henry, and moved from Leicester on Bosworth Field where he encountered his rival.]

RICHARD had ridden out of Leicester in the same state and splendour in which he had entered it, wearing his crown on the helmet of a rich suit of steel armour that

he had first worn at Tewkesbury; and passing on to Mirwall Abbey, encamped upon a hill called Anbeam, overlooking a broad extent of open ground, called Redmoor, not far from the town of Market-Bosworth. It was about two miles long and one mile broad, intersected by a thick wood, and bounded on the south by a little stream, on the north by rising ground, and by a swamp called Amyon Lays. Richard was to the west, Henry to the east. Restless and distrustful, Richard rose at midnight, wandered alone through his outposts, found a sentinel slumbering, and stabbed him to the heart as he lay, then returned to endeavour to recruit himself by sleep for the next day; but he was awake again, long before the chaplains were ready to say Mass, or the attendants to bring breakfast; and he told his servants of the sentry's fate, grimly saying, "I found him asleep, and have left him as I found him." No thought of mercy was in the mind of the man bold in civil war, whose early recollections were of Wakefield and Towton, and whose maiden sword had been fleshed at Barnet.¹ He only said that, go the battle as it might, England would suffer; "from Lancaster to Shrewsbury he would leave none alive, knight or squire; and from Holyhead to St. David's, where were castles and towers should all be parks and fields. All should repent that ever they rose against their king; and if Richmond triumphed, the Lancastrians would of course take a bloody vengeance."

One strange episode is said to have occupied Richard on that morning of doom. He had acknowledged two illegitimate children, John and Katharine, whom he had brought up with the young Prince of Wales; he had knighted the one and given the other in marriage to the Earl of Huntingdon;

¹ *His father had been slain in the Battle of Wakefield; his brother Edward set on the throne in the bloody fight of Towton; Warwick overthrown at Barnet.*

but he had yet another, named Richard. This young boy was brought to the royal tent at that moment, and heard for the first time that the pale, haggard, agitated man, small, slight, and deformed, yet whose dark eyes flashed with indomitable fierceness and pride as he donned the helmet with its regal crown, was his father! He was too young for the battle, and Richard bade him remain on the hill, and watch, so as to escape if he saw the white boar and the white rose² give way.

Anxious tidings kept on coming in. The duke of Norfolk brought in a paper he had found pinned to his tent in the morning, bearing the lines—

“ Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold,
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold ;

and when, thus rendered even more anxious, Richard sent to command the personal attendance of Lord Stanley³ and his brother William, they flatly refused to come. Thereupon he gave instant orders to strike off young Stanley's head ;⁴ but the opposite army already showed signs of movement, and the execution was deferred.

Richard then arrayed his men. His army seems to have numbered about 16,000, and he decided on extending the vanguard to the utmost, so as if possible to outflank and enwrap the enemy. In their centre he placed a dense body of archers, and amongst them seven score guns called sargents, chained and locked in a row, behind a trench, with the men who knew how to use harquebuses and morris-pikes

² *The white boar was Richard's own badge; the white rose the badge of the House of York.* ³ *Both Richard and Henry hoped for Lord Stanley's aid. He had married Richmond's mother; but he had been loaded with honours by Richard. His choice was in the end to turn the battle, as he led a large force to the field.* ⁴ *Lord Stanley's son, Lord Strange, was kept by Richard as a hostage for his father's loyalty.*

also stationed round them, all guarded by a trench. This was under the command of Norfolk ; the second line under that of Northumberland ;⁵ and Richard himself took charge of a body of troops formed into a dense square, with wings of horsemen. Henry, meantime, was almost as uneasy about the Stanleys as Richard himself, for neither did they obey his summons ; and without their 8,000, his force was no more than 5,000. He formed this little troop into three lines, spreading them as far as possible, giving the centre to the experienced Earl of Oxford, the right wing to Sir Gilbert Talbot, the left to Sir John Savage. He rode through the army, giving them comfortable words—entirely armed, all save his helmet ; and the long golden hair, that witnessed to his Plantagenet ancestry, flowing down to his shoulders. The soldiers closed their helmets and shook their bills ; the archers strung their bows and “ frushed ” their arrows. Each side stood ready for the last of the hundred battles of the Plantagenets.

Richmond moved first, so as to bring the right flank of his army alongside of the swamp, and prevent Richard's long line from closing upon that side, and besides so as to bring the August sun on the backs instead of the faces of his men. They seem to have waited for a charge from the enemy ; but as none was made, Oxford resolved to make a sudden and furious dash at the centre, where Norfolk was in command. The fighting was hot and vehement, and the small band of the Lancastrians must have been beaten off, but that the Earl of Northumberland, in the second line, never stirred to the aid of Norfolk. The Duke went down, his son the Earl of Surrey surrendered ; and the Mowbray banner was down.

Richard, maddened at the sight, and seeing half his army

⁵ *The Earl of Northumberland, like Lord Stanley, had secretly promised aid to Henry.*

standing inactive, determined to make a desperate charge down the hill upon Henry himself ; but fevered with the thirst of the agitation of this desperate crisis, he flung himself down and took a long draught from a spring that still goes by the name of Dick's Well. Then he put his lance in the rest, and together with his most attached adherents—Lovell, Catesby, Ratcliffe, Brackenbury, Lord Ferrers, and Sir Gervoise Clifton, and their nearest followers, putting their lances in rest, rode headlong upon Richmond, as indeed the last hope now lay in the destruction of the individual rival. Small and slender as Richard was, he did wonders : he drove his lance through the armpit of Sir William Brandon, the standard bearer ; and as Sir John Cheyney, a man of gigantic frame, threw himself in front of Henry, he unhorsed him at the first shock. But others had closed in between the two rivals ; and at that moment a knight—Catesby, as it is said—pointed out to the King that Sir William Stanley, hitherto inactive, was moving with his 3,000 men to crush him completely, and tendering to him a swift and fresh horse, advised him to save himself by flight, saying, “ I hold it time for ye to fly. Yonder Stanley, his dints be so sore, against them no man may stand. Here is thy horse ; another day ye may worship again.” “ Never ! ” cried Richard. “ Not one foot will I fly so long as breath bides within my breast. Here will I end all my battles or my life. I will die King of England.”

Down came cautious Stanley, and the fray thickened. The charge had been but just in time to save Henry, but when it came it was overpowering. “ Treason ! treason ! treason ! ” cried Richard at every blow ; but his followers fell around him, his standard-bearer clinging to his standard and waving it even till his legs were cut from under him, and then he still grasped and waved it till his last gasp. Sir Gervoise Clifton and Sir John Byron, near neighbours,

had, ere parting to take opposite sides, agreed that whichever was on the winning party should protect the family and estates of the other. As Clifton fell, Byron ran to support him on his shield ; but Clifton could only murmur, " All is over—remember your pledge ;" and Byron did faithfully remember it. Sir Robert Brackenbury met a knight named Hungerford, who had gone over to the Tudor on the march, and defied him as a deserting traitor. " I will not answer in words," said Hungerford, aiming a blow at his head, which he caught on his shield, and shivered it to atoms. " No advantage will I take," cried Hungerford, throwing away his shield ; but even then he sorely wounded Brackenbury, who fell ; and another knight cried, " Spare his life, brave Hungerford, he has been our friend, and so may be again ;" but it was too late, for Brackenbury was already expiring.

Richard, after fighting like a lion, and hewing down whatever came within the sweep of his sword, was falling under the weight of numbers, and loud shouts proclaimed his fall. His party turned and fled, and were pursued closely for about fifty minutes, during which towards a thousand men were slain, and tradition declares that the mounds along the track are their graves. Drayton sings—

" O Redmore Heath ! then it seemed thy name was not in vain,
When with a thousand's blood the earth was coloured red."

This was just as the old English name of Senlac became in Norman mouths Sanguelac after Hastings. At last a steep rising ground, after about two miles, slackened the pursuit, for Henry had no desire to fulfil Richard's bloody prophecy. His uncle, Jasper Earl of Pembroke, and Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford, victorious at last after their many piteous defeats, and Lord Stanley, halted with him ; and Sir Reginald Bray came up with the crown that Richard had

so proudly worn, and which he had found hanging on a hawthorn bush, dented and battered; but such as it was the Lord Stanley set it on Henry's head, and shouts of "God save King Harry!" rang throughout the field. Crown Hill became the name of the eminence, and Henry adopted as his badge the Crown in the May-bush. He knelt down and returned thanks for his victory.

VII.

THE FIELD OF CLOTH OF GOLD.

YONGE.

[With the accession of the House of Tudor the civil wars came to an end. The aim of Henry the Seventh was not only to give peace to the country, but to raise the power of the crown high above the barons who had set up and put down kings. With his reign the feudal character of England came to an end; while the rare assemblage of Parliaments freed the monarchy from the restraints which the Houses had put upon it. His son, Henry the Eighth, succeeded to the power which his father had patiently built up at home; and his stirring temper led him to seek for a corresponding influence abroad. Under the guidance of his minister, Cardinal Wolsey, he mixed in the great contest which France and the House of Austria were waging for supremacy over the Continent. Both powers sought his friendship; and in one of their interviews for this purpose Henry and the French King, Francis the First, so vied in splendour, that the field where they met was known as the Field of Cloth of Gold.]

THE place of meeting was to be between Ardres and Guisnes, within the English pale.¹ Hundreds of skilful workmen were employed in erecting the pavilions that were

¹ *The border round Calais.*

to lodge the two courts; barons and gentlemen flocked in from all parts—many of whom, it was said, had spent a whole year's income in fitting themselves for the display; and councillors and heralds rode backwards and forwards incessantly, arranging the precautions and the etiquettes of the meeting. The two kings might, so ruled the statesmen, meet in open field; but neither might trust himself in the camp of the other unless on principles of exchange. They might mutually visit the Queens, but neither might be at home when his brother king visited him. Each must be a hostage for the other.

François's chief tent before Ardres was a magnificent dome, sustained by one mighty mast, and covered without with cloth of gold, lined with blue velvet, with all the orbs of heaven worked on it in gold, and on the top, outside, a hollow golden figure of St. Michael. The cords were of blue silk twisted with gold of Cyprus; but the chronicler of the French display is obliged to confess that the King of England's lodgings were *trop plus belle*.² They were certainly more solid, for eleven hundred workmen, mostly from Holland and Flanders, had been employed on them for weeks, chiefly about the hangings, for the framework was of English timber, and made at home. Bacchus presided over a fountain of wine in the court, with several subordinate fountains of red, white, and claret wines, and the motto, "*Faites bonne chère qui voudra*,"³ a politer one than that which labelled the savage man with a bow and arrows who stood before the door, "*Cui adhæreo præest*,"—He prevails to whom I adhere. The outside of the castle was canvas painted to resemble stone work, the inside hung with the richest arras, and all divided into halls, chambers, and galleries, like any palace at home, with a chapel of the utmost splendour. It had the great advantage of superior

² *Far more beautiful.*

³ *Let who will make good cheer.*

stability, for a high wind levelled François's blue dome with the dust, and forced him to take shelter in the old castle of Ardres.

On the first day, Wolsey had a conference with François, Duprat with Henry, the upshot of which was that their children should be married. One hundred thousand crowns a year were to be paid to Henry, nominally with a view to this hypothetical marriage, but really to secure his neutrality;⁴ and the affairs of Scotland were to be settled by the arbitration of Louise of Savoy⁵ and Cardinal Wolsey.

This settled, each king got on horseback, himself and steed both wearing as much cloth of gold and silver as could possibly be put on them, and met in the valley of Ardres. They saluted and embraced on horseback, and then dismounting at the same moment, walked arm-in-arm into the tent prepared for them, where a splendid feast was spread, with two trees in the midst, the English hawthorn and French raspberry lovingly entwined. Lists had been prepared, and invitations to a tournament issued long before; and on the 11th of June, Queen Katharine and Queen Claude⁶ sat side by side, with their feet on a foot-cloth brodered with seed-pearls, to admire the jousting, in which both their husbands took a part. Armour had come to such a state of cumbrous perfection by this time, that it was not very easy to be killed in a real battle (barring fire-arms), and tilting matches were very safe amusements. Six days were given to tilting with the lance, two to fights with the broadsword on horseback, two to fighting on foot at the barriers. On the last day there was some wrestling at the barriers, and Henry, who was fond of the sport, and never had tried it with an equal, put his hand on his good brother's collar

⁴ *In the struggle of Francis with Charles of Austria.*

⁵ *The French King's mother.*

⁶ *The Queens of England*

and France.

and challenged him to try a fall. Both were in the prime of life, stately, well-made men; but François was the younger, lighter, and more agile, and Henry, to his amazement, found himself on his back. He rose and demanded another turn; but the noblemen interfered, thinking it a game that might leave animosities.

François was heartily weary of the formalities of their intercourse, and early one morning called a page and two gentlemen, mounted his horse and rode up to the English canvas castle, where he found Henry still in bed, and merrily offered himself to him as captive, to which Henry responded in the same tone, by leaping up and throwing a rich collar round his neck by way of chain. François then undertook to help him to dress, warming his shirt, spreading out his hose, and trussing his points—namely, tying the innumerable little strings that connected the doublet with the hose or breeches, rendering it nearly impossible to dress without assistance. After having had his frolic François rode home again, meeting a lecture on the way from the Sieur de Fleuranges, who took him to task thus: “Sire, I am glad to see you back; but allow me to tell you, my master, that you were a fool for what you have done, and ill-luck betide those who advised you to it.”

“That was no one—the thought was my own,” replied the King.

And the King was altogether the more reasonable, for Englishmen had never been in the habit of murdering or imprisoning their guests, and never in his life did Henry VIII. show a taste for assassination. Yet when he beheld the arrogant manners and extraordinary display of the Constable of France, Charles de Bourbon, he could not help observing, mindful of what Warwick had been, “If I had such a subject as that, his head should not stay long on his shoulders.”

The next day, which was the last of this gorgeous fortnight—Midsummer Day—King Henry apparelled himself like Hercules. That is to say, he had a shirt of silver damask with the discourteous motto, "*En femes et infantes cy petit assurance*,"⁷ on his head a garland of green damask cut into vine and hawthorn leaves, in his hand a club covered with "green damask full of pricks;" the Nemean lion's skull was of cloth of gold, "wrought and frizzed with flat gold of damask" for the mane, and buskins of gold. His sister Mary, in white and crimson satin, accompanied him; also the nine worthies, nineteen ladies, and a good many more, mounted on horses trapped with yellow and white velvet. Thus they set out to visit Queen Claude at Guisnes, meeting halfway a fantastic chariot, containing King François and all his masquers, on their way to make a like call upon Queen Katharine. The two parties took no notice of each other, but passed on; but when returning after supper they met again, the Kings embraced, exchanged presents, and bade farewell, when verily the scene must have been stranger than any other ever enacted under the open sky—a true midsummer night's dream.

"During this triumph," observed Hall, who was never more in his element, "so much people of Picardy and west Flanders drew to Guisnes to see the King of England and his honour, to whom victuals of the court were in plenty; the conduit of the gate ran wine always,—there were vagabonds, ploughmen, labourers, waggoners, and beggars, that for drunkenness lay in routs and heaps. So great resort thither came, that both knights and ladies that were come to see the nobleness were fain to lie in hay and straw, and held them thereof highly pleased."

And of these same knights and ladies, the French memoir writer, Du Bellay, says, "I will not pause to relate the great

⁷ *Little trust can be in women and children.*

superfluous expense, for it cannot be estimated. It was such that many wore their mills, their forests, and their meadows, upon their backs."

VIII.

FLODDEN FIELD.

SCOTT.

[In spite of this show of friendship Henry's alliance was really given to the French King's rival, the Emperor Charles the Fifth; and Francis avenged himself by spurring the Scots to make war on England. Their King, James the Fourth, led his army over the English border into Northumberland, and there met the English at Flodden Field.]

THE Scottish army had fixed their camp upon a hill called Flodden, which rises to close in, as it were, the extensive flat called Millfield Plain. This eminence slopes steeply towards the plain, and there is an extended piece of level ground on the top, where the Scots might have drawn up their army, and awaited at great advantage the attack of the English. Surrey¹ liked the idea of venturing an assault on that position so ill, that he resolved to try whether he could not prevail on the King to abandon it. He sent a herald to invite James to come down from the height, and join battle in the open plain of Millfield below—reminded him of the readiness with which he had accepted his former challenge—and hinted, that it was the opinion of the English chivalry assembled for battle that any delay of the encounter would sound to the King's dishonour. We have seen that James was sufficiently rash and imprudent, but

¹ *The Earl of Surrey, the English leader.*

his impetuosity did not reach to the pitch Surrey perhaps expected. He refused to receive the messenger into his presence, and returned for answer to the message, that it was not such as it became an earl to send to a king.

Surrey, therefore, distressed for provisions, was obliged to resort to another mode of bringing the Scots to action. He moved northward, sweeping round the hill of Flodden, keeping out of the reach of the Scottish artillery, until, crossing the Till near Twisell castle, he placed himself, with his whole army, betwixt James and his own kingdom. The King suffered him to make this flank movement without interruption, though it must have afforded repeated and advantageous opportunities for attack. But when he saw the English army interposed betwixt him and his dominions, he became alarmed lest he should be cut off from Scotland. In this apprehension he was confirmed by one Giles Musgrave, an Englishman, whose counsel he used upon the occasion, and who assured him that if he did not descend and fight with the English army, the Earl of Surrey would enter Scotland, and lay waste the whole country. Stimulated by this apprehension the King resolved to give signal for the fatal battle. With this view the Scots set fire to their huts and the other refuse and litter of their camp. The smoke spread along the side of the hill, and under its cover the army of King James descended the eminence, which is much less steep on the northern than the southern side, while the English advanced to meet them, both concealed from each other by the clouds of smoke.

The Scots descended in four strong columns, all marching parallel to each other, having a reserve of the Lothian men, commanded by Earl Bothwell. The English were also divided into four bodies, with a reserve of cavalry led by Dacre.

The battle commenced at the hour of four in the afternoon. The first which encountered was the left wing of the Scots, commanded by the Earl of Huntly and Lord Home, which overpowered and threw into disorder the right wing of the English, under Sir Edmund Howard. Sir Edmund was beaten down, his standard taken, and he himself in danger of instant death, when he was relieved by the Bastard Heron, who came up at the head of a band of determined outlaws like himself, and extricated Howard. But the English cavalry, under Dacre, which acted as a reserve, appears to have kept the victors in check; while Thomas Howard, the lord high admiral, who commanded the second division of the English, bore down and routed the Scottish division commanded by Crawford and Montrose, who were both slain. Thus matters went on the Scottish left. Upon the extreme right of James's army a division of Highlanders, consisting of the clans of MacKenzie, MacLean and others, commanded by the Earls of Lennox and Argyle were so insufferably annoyed by the volleys of English arrows, that they broke their ranks, and, in despite of the cries, entreaties, and signals of the French ambassador, who endeavoured to stop them, rushed tumultuously down hill, and being at once attacked in front and rear by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Cheshire and Lancashire, were routed with great slaughter.

The only Scottish division which remains to be mentioned was commanded by James in person, and consisted of the choicest of his nobles and gentry, whose armour was so good that the arrows made but slight impression upon them. They were all on foot—the King himself had parted with his horse. They engaged the Earl of Surrey, who opposed to them the division which he personally commanded. The Scots attacked with the greatest fury, and, for a time, had the better. Surrey's squadrons were

disordered, his standard in great danger, Bothwell and the Scottish reserve were advancing, and the English seemed in some risk of losing the battle. But Stanley, who had defeated the Highlanders, came up on one flank of the King's division; the admiral, who had conquered Crawford and Montrose, assailed them on the other. The Scots showed the most undaunted courage. Uniting themselves with the reserve under Bothwell they formed into a circle, with their spears extended on every side, and fought obstinately. Bows being now useless, the English advanced on all sides with their bills, a huge weapon which made ghastly wounds. But they could not force the Scots either to break or retire, although the carnage among them was dreadful. James himself died amidst his warlike peers and loyal gentry. He was twice wounded with arrows, and at length despatched with a bill. Night fell without the battle being absolutely decided, for the Scottish centre kept their ground, and Home and Dacre held each other at bay. But during the night the remainder of the Scottish army drew off in silent despair from the bloody field, on which they left their King and their choicest nobles and gentlemen.

This great and decisive victory was gained by the Earl of Surrey on 9th September, 1513. The victors had about five thousand men slain, the Scots twice that number at least. But the loss lay not so much in the number of the slain as in their rank and quality. The English lost very few men of distinction. The Scots left on the field the King, two bishops, two mitred abbots, twelve earls, thirteen lords, and five eldest sons of peers. The number of gentlemen slain was beyond calculation—there is scarcely a family of name in Scottish history who did not lose a relative there.

The body which the English affirm to have been that of James was found on the field by Lord Dacre, and carried

by him to Berwick, and presented to Surrey. Both of these lords knew James's person too well to be mistaken. The body was also acknowledged by his two favourite attendants, Sir William Scott and Sir John Forman, who wept at beholding it. The fate of these relics was singular and degrading. They were not committed to the tomb, for the Pope, being at that time in alliance with England against France, had laid James under a sentence of excommunication, so that no priest dared pronounce the funeral service over them. The royal corpse was therefore embalmed and sent to the Monastery of Sheen, in Surrey. It lay there till the Reformation, when the monastery was given to the Duke of Suffolk; and after that period the body, which was lapped up in a sheet of lead, was suffered to toss about the house like a piece of useless lumber. Stow, the historian, saw it flung into a waste room among old pieces of wood, lead, and other rubbish. Some idle workmen, "for their foolish pleasure," says the same writer, "hewed off the head; and one Lancelot Young, master-glazier to Queen Elizabeth, finding a sweet smell come from thence, owing doubtless to the spices used for embalming the body, carried the head home and kept it for some time; but in the end caused the sexton of Saint Michael's, Wood Street, to bury it in the charnel-house."

IX.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

GREEN.

[While Henry the Eighth was thus dreaming of foreign wars and conquests, the world was being stirred by the first movements of the religious change called the Reformation. This began with Luther, who soon won

Northern Germany from its adherence to the Pope ; but it passed over to England, where the ground had been prepared for it by the previous efforts of Wyclif and the Lollards.]

As a great social and political movement Lollardry had ceased to exist, and little remained of the directly religious impulse given by Wyclif beyond a vague restlessness and discontent with the system of the Church. But weak and fitful as was the life of Lollardry, the prosecutions whose records lie scattered over the bishops' registers failed wholly to kill it. We see groups meeting here and there to read "in a great book of heresy all one night certain chapters of the Evangelists in English," while transcripts of Wyclif's tracts passed from hand to hand. The smouldering embers needed but a breath to fan them into flame, and the breath came from William Tyndale. Born among the Cotswolds¹ when Bosworth Field gave England to the Tudors, Tyndale passed from Oxford to Cambridge to feel the full impulse given by the appearance there of the New Testament of Erasmus.² From that moment one thought was at his heart. He "perceived by experience how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue." "If God spare my life," he said to a learned controversialist, "ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the scripture than thou dost." But he was a man of forty before his dream became fact. Drawn from his retirement in Gloucestershire by the news of Luther's protest at Wittemberg,³ he found shelter

¹ *In Gloucestershire.* ² *A Dutch scholar whose version of the Greek Testament, with notes, gave the first impulse to new religious thought. He taught for a while at Cambridge.*

³ *Luther began his work by a protest against the sale of indulgences or the remission of purgatorial punishment for sins.*

for a year with a London alderman, Humfrey Monmouth. "He studied most part of the day at his book," said his host afterwards, "and would eat but sodden meat by his good will and drink but small single beer." The book at which he studied was the Bible. But it was soon needful to quit England if his purpose was to hold. "I understood at the last not only that there was no room in my lord of London's⁴ palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England."

From Hamburg, where he took refuge in 1524, he probably soon found his way to the little town which had suddenly become the sacred city of the Reformation.⁵ Students of all nations were flocking there with an enthusiasm which resembled that of the Crusades. "As they came in sight of the town," a contemporary tells us, "they returned thanks to God with clasped hands, for from Wittemberg, as heretofore from Jerusalem, the light of evangelical truth had spread to the utmost parts of the earth." Such a visit could only fire Tyndale to face the "poverty, exile, bitter absence from friends, hunger and thirst and cold, great dangers, and innumerable other hard and sharp fightings," which the work he had set himself was to bring with it. In 1525 his version of the New Testament was completed, and means were furnished by English merchants for printing it at Köln. But Tyndale had soon to fly with his sheets to Worms, a city whose Lutheran tendencies made it a safer refuge, and it was from Worms that six thousand copies of the New Testament were sent in 1526 to English shores.

The King was keenly opposed to a book which he looked on as made "at the solicitation and instance of Luther;" and even the men of the New⁶ Learning, from whom it

⁴ *The Bishop of London.*

⁵ *Wittemberg, where Luther taught.*

⁶ *The scholars who sympathized with learning and*

might have hoped for welcome, were estranged from it by its Lutheran origin. We can only fairly judge their action by viewing it in the light of the time. What Warham and More⁷ saw over sea might well have turned them from a movement which seemed breaking down the very foundations of religion and society. Not only was the fabric of the Church rent asunder and the centre of Christian unity⁸ denounced as "Babylon," but the reform itself seemed passing into anarchy. Luther was steadily moving onward from the denial of one Catholic dogma to that of another; and what Luther still clung to his followers were ready to fling away. Carlstadt was denouncing the reformer of Wittenberg as fiercely as Luther himself had denounced the Pope, and meanwhile the religious excitement was kindling wild dreams of social revolution, and men stood aghast at the horrors of a Peasant War which broke out in Southern Germany. It was not therefore as a mere translation of the Bible that Tyndale's work reached England. It came as a part of the Lutheran movement, and it bore the Lutheran stamp in its version of ecclesiastical words. "Church" became "congregation," "priest" was changed into "elder." It came too in company with Luther's bitter invectives and reprints of the tracts of Wyclif, which the German traders of the Steelyard⁹ were importing in large numbers. We can hardly wonder that More denounced the book as heretical, or that Warham ordered it to be given up by all who possessed it.

Wolsey took little heed of religious matters, but his policy was one of political adhesion to Rome, and he presided over a solemn penance to which some Steelyard men sub-

with the work of Erasmus were called "Men of the New Learning." ⁷ Archbishop Warham and Sir Thomas More were the heads of the New Learning in England. ⁸ Rome, or the Papacy. ⁹ The London establishment of the traders from the Hanseatic towns of North Germany.

mitted in St. Paul's. "With six and thirty abbots, mitred priors, and bishops, and he in his whole pomp mitred" the Cardinal looked on while "great baskets full of books . . . were commanded after the great fire was made before the Rood of Northen," the crucifix by the great north door of the cathedral, "thus to be burned, and those heretics to go thrice about the fire and to cast in their fagots." But scenes and denunciations such as these were vain in the presence of an enthusiasm which grew every hour. "Englishmen," says a scholar of the time, "were so eager for the gospel as to affirm that they would buy a New Testament even if they had to give a hundred thousand pieces of money for it." Bibles and pamphlets were smuggled over to England and circulated among the poorer and trading classes through the agency of an association of "Christian Brethren," consisting principally of London tradesmen and citizens, but whose missionaries spread over the country at large.

They found their way at once to the Universities where the intellectual impulse given by the New Learning was quickening religious speculation. Cambridge had already won a name for heresy; Barnes, one of its foremost scholars, had to carry his fagot before Wolsey at St. Paul's; two other Cambridge teachers, Bilney and Latimer, were already known as "Lutherans." The Cambridge scholars whom Wolsey introduced into Cardinal College¹⁰ which he was founding spread the contagion through Oxford. A group of "Brethren" was formed in Cardinal College for the secret reading and discussion of the Epistles; and this soon included the more intelligent and learned scholars of the University. It was in vain that Clark, the centre of this group, strove to dissuade fresh members from joining it by warnings of the impending dangers. "I fell

¹⁰ *Now Christ-Church.*

down on my knees at his feet," says one of them, Anthony Dalaber, "and with tears and sighs besought him that for the tender mercy of God he should not refuse me, saying that I trusted verily that he who had begun this on me would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein to the end. When he heard me say so he came to me, took me in his arms, and kissed me, saying, 'The Lord God Almighty grant you so to do, and from henceforth ever take me for your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ.'"

X.

CORONATION OF ANNE BOLEYN.

FROUDE.

[Henry the Eighth had no love for the new opinions : but at this moment he was drawn into a quarrel with the Papacy by its refusal to divorce him from his Queen, Catharine of Aragon. The quarrel widened into an actual breach between Rome and England. Henry threw off all connexion with Rome, and in defiance of its injunctions married a new queen, Anne Boleyn. Her solemn coronation announced that the separation of England from the Papacy was irrevocable.]

ON the morning of the 31st of May, the families of the London citizens were stirring early in all houses. From Temple Bar to the Tower the streets were fresh strewed with gravel, the footpaths were railed off along the whole distance, and occupied on one side by the gilds, their workmen and apprentices, on the other by the city constables and officials in their gaudy uniforms, "with their staves in hand for to cause the people to keep good

room and order." Cornhill and Gracechurch Street had dressed their fronts in scarlet and crimson, in arras and tapestry, and the rich carpet-work from Persia and the East. Cheapside, to outshine her rivals, was draped even more splendidly in cloth of gold, and tissue and velvet. The sheriffs were pacing up and down on their great Flemish horses, hung with liveries, and all the windows were thronged with ladies crowding to see the procession pass. At length the Tower guns opened, the grim gates rolled back, and under the archway, in the bright May sunshine, the long column began slowly to defile. Two states only permitted their representatives to grace the scene with their presence—Venice and France. It was perhaps to make the most of this isolated countenance that the French ambassador's train formed the van of the cavalcade. Twelve French knights came riding foremost in surcoats of blue velvet with sleeves of yellow silk, their horses trapped in blue, with white crosses powdered on their hangings. After them followed a troop of English gentlemen, two and two, and then the Knights of the Bath, "in gowns of violet with hoods purpled with miniver, like doctors." Next, perhaps at a little interval, the abbots passed on mitred in their robes; the barons followed in crimson velvet, the bishops then, and then the earls and marquises, the dresses of each order increasing in elaborate gorgeousness. All these rode on in pairs. Then came alone Audeley, Lord Chancellor, and behind him the Venetian ambassador and the Archbishop of York; the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Du Bellay, Bishop of Bayonne and of Paris, not now with bugle and hunting-frock, but solemn with stole and crozier. Next, the lord mayor, with the city mace in hand, and Garter in his coat-of-arms; and then Lord William Howard—Belted Will Howard, of the Scottish Border, Marshal of England. The

officers of the Queen's household succeeded the marshal in scarlet and gold, and the van of the procession was closed by the Duke of Suffolk, as high constable, with his silver wand. It is no easy matter to picture to ourselves the blazing trail of splendour which in such a pageant must have drawn along the London streets,—those streets which now we know so black and smoke-grimed, themselves then radiant with masses of colour, gold, and crimson, and violet. Yet there it was, and there the sun could shine upon it, and tens of thousands of eyes were gazing on the scene out of the crowded lattices.

Glorious as the spectacle was, perhaps however it passed unheeded. Those eyes were watching all for another object which now drew near. In an open space behind the constable there was seen approaching a "white chariot," drawn by two palfreys in white damask which swept the ground; a golden canopy borne above it, making music with silver bells: and in the chariot sat the observed of all observers, the beautiful occasion of all this glittering homage; fortune's plaything of the hour,¹ the Queen of England—queen at last—borne along upon the waves of this sea of glory, breathing the perfumed incense of greatness which she had risked her fair name, her delicacy, her honour, her self-respect to win; and she had won it. There she sate, dressed in white tissue robes, her fair hair flowing loose over her shoulders, and her temples circled with a light coronet of gold and diamonds—most beautiful—loveliest—most favoured perhaps, as she seemed at that hour, of all England's daughters.

Three short years have yet to pass, and again, on a summer morning, Queen Anne Boleyn will leave the Tower of London—not radiant then with beauty on a gay errand of coronation, but a poor wandering ghost, on a sad tragic

¹ *Anne Boleyn.*

errand, from which she will never more return, passing away out of an earth, where she may stay no longer, into a presence where, nevertheless, we know that all is well—for all of us—and therefore for her.

But let us not cloud her short-lived sunshine with the shadow of the future. She went on in her loveliness, the peeresses following in their carriages, with the royal guard in their rear. In Fenchurch Street she was met by the children of the city schools; and at the corner of Gracechurch Street a masterpiece had been prepared of the pseudo-classic art, then so fashionable, by the merchants of the Styll-yard. A Mount Parnassus had been constructed, and a Helicon fountain upon it playing into a basin with four jets of Rhenish wine. On the top of the mountain sat Apollo with Calliope at his feet, and on either side the remaining Muses, holding lutes or harps, and singing each of them some "posy" or epigram in praise of the Queen, which was presented, after it had been sung, written in letters of gold. From Gracechurch Street, the procession passed to Leadenhall, where there was a spectacle in better taste, of the old English Catholic kind, quaint perhaps and forced, but truly and even beautifully emblematic. There was again "a little mountain," which was hung with red and white roses; a gold ring was placed on the summit, on which, as the Queen appeared, a white falcon was made to "descend as out of the sky"—"and then incontinent came down an angel with great melody, and set a close crown of gold upon the falcon's head; and in the same pageant sat Saint Anne with all her issue beneath her; and Mary Cleophas with her four children, of the which children one made a goodly oration to the Queen, of the fruitfulness of Saint Anne, trusting that the fruit should come of her."

With such "pretty conceits," at that time the honest tokens of an English welcome, the new Queen was received

by the citizens of London. These scenes must be multiplied by the number of the streets, where some fresh fancy met her at every turn. To preserve the festivities from flagging, every fountain and conduit within the walls ran all day with wine; the bells of every steeple were ringing; children lay in wait with songs, and ladies with posies, in which all the resources of fantastic extravagance were exhausted; and thus in an unbroken triumph—and to outward appearance received with the warmest affection—she passed under Temple Bar, down the Strand by Charing Cross to Westminster Hall. The King was not with her throughout the day; nor did he intend to be with her in any part of the ceremony. She was to reign without a rival, the undisputed sovereign of the hour.

Saturday being passed in showing herself to the people, she retired for the night to "the King's manour-house at Westminster," where she slept. On the following morning between eight and nine o'clock she returned to the Hall, where the lord mayor, the city council, and the peers were again assembled, and took her place on the high daïs at the top of the stairs under the cloth of state; while the bishops, the abbots, and the monks of the Abbey formed in the area. A railed way had been laid with carpets across Palace Yard and the Sanctuary to the Abbey gates, and when all was ready, preceded by the peers in their robes of Parliament, the Knights of the Garter in the dress of the order, she swept out under her canopy, the bishops and the monks "solemnly singing." The train was borne by the old Duchess of Norfolk, her aunt, the Bishops of London and Winchester on either side "bearing up the lappets of her robe." The Earl of Oxford carried the crown on its cushion immediately before her. She was dressed in purple velvet furred with ermine, her hair escaping loose, as she usually wore it, under a wreath of diamonds. On entering

the Abbey she was led to the coronation chair, where she sat while the train fell into their places, and the preliminaries of the ceremonial were despatched. Then she was conducted up to the high altar and anointed Queen of England, and she received from the hands of Cranmer,² fresh come in haste from Dunstable, with the last words of his sentence upon Catharine scarcely silent upon his lips, the golden sceptre and St. Edward's crown.

XI.

WYAT'S INSURRECTION.

LINGARD.

[Anne Boleyn was soon divorced and put to death; but Henry still clung to his independence of Rome. But though thus parted from the Pope, he strove to avoid any change of religious belief, for he hated Protestantism as much as he hated Rome. When he died, however, the Protestants became rulers of England. The new King, Edward the Sixth, was a boy; and the nobles who ruled in his name were Protestants and forced their belief on the land. There was revolt and discontent, for the bulk of Englishmen were like Henry the Eighth, and wished to be free from Rome, but to retain their old beliefs. Revolt however was put down; and all had to be Protestants till Edward died, a few years afterwards. Then his sister Mary came to the throne. She was a bigoted Catholic, and set herself to undo all that had been done. Not only did she do away with Protestantism, but she brought England again under obedience to the See of Rome. At first she did not persecute the Protestants: but they feared she would soon do so; and their fears were increased by news of Mary's purpose to wed Philip of Spain. They rose in revolt in Western and Middle England, and above all in Kent.]

² *Cranmer was Archbishop of Canterbury. He had just pronounced the sentence of divorce between Henry and Catharine.*

It was in Kent only that the insurrection assumed a formidable appearance under the direction of Sir Thomas Wyatt. If we may believe his own assertion he ought not to be charged with the origin of the conspiracy. It was formed without his knowledge, and was first communicated to him by the Earl of Devon ; but he engaged in it with cheerfulness, under the persuasion that the marriage of the Queen with Philip would be followed by the death of the Lady Elizabeth,¹ and by the subversion of the national liberties. By the apostasy of Courtenay,² he became one of the principals in the insurrection : and while his associates, by their presumption and weakness, proved themselves unequal to the attempt, he excited the applause of his very adversaries, by the secrecy and address with which he organized the rising, and by the spirit and perseverance with which he conducted the enterprise. The moment he drew the sword, fifteen hundred armed men assembled around him ; while five thousand others remained at their homes, ready, at the first toll of the alarum-bell, to crowd to his standard. He fixed his head-quarters in the old and ruinous castle of Rochester ; a squadron of five sail, in the Thames, under his secret associate Winter, supplied him with cannon and ammunition ; and batteries were erected to command the passage of the bridge, and the opposite bank of the river. Yet fortune did not appear to favour his first attempts. Sir Robert Southwell dispersed a party of insurgents under Knevet ; the Lord Abergavenny defeated a large reinforcement led by Isley, another of the conspirators ; and the citizens of Canterbury rejected his entreaties and derided his threats. It required all his address to keep his followers together. Though he boasted of the succours which he daily expected from France

¹ *Anne Boleyn's daughter, afterwards Queen Elizabeth.*

² *The Earl of Devon.*

though he circulated reports of successful risings in other parts of the country, many of the insurgents began to waver ; several sent to the council offers to return to their duty, on condition of pardon ; and there is reason to believe that the main force under Wyatt would have dissolved of itself, had it been suffered to remain a few days longer in a state of inactivity.

But the Duke of Norfolk had already marched from London, with a detachment of guards, under the command of Sir Henry Jerningham. He was immediately followed by five hundred Londoners, led by Captain Bret, and was afterwards joined by the Sheriff of Kent with the bands of the county. This force was far inferior in number to the enemy ; and, what was of more disastrous consequence, some of its leaders were in secret league with Wyatt. The Duke, having in vain made an offer of pardon, ordered the bridge to be forced. The troops were already in motion, when Bret, who led the van, halted his column, and raising his sword, exclaimed, " Masters, we are going to fight in an unholy quarrel against our friends and countrymen, who seek only to preserve us from the dominion of foreigners. Wherefore I think that no English heart should oppose them, and am resolved for my own part to shed my blood in the cause of this worthy captain, Master Wyatt." This address was seconded by Brian Fitzwilliam ; shouts of " a Wyatt ! a Wyatt ! " burst from the ranks ; and the Londoners, instead of advancing against the rebels, faced about to oppose the royalists. At that moment Wyatt himself joined them at the head of his cavalry ; and the Duke, with his principal officers, apprehending a general defection, fled towards Gravesend. Seven pieces of artillery fell into the hands of the insurgents ; their ranks were recruited from the deserters ; and the whole body, confident of victory, began their march in the direction of London.

This unexpected result revealed to the Queen the alarming secret that the conspiracy had pushed its branches into the very heart of the metropolis. Every precaution was immediately taken for the security of the court, the Tower, and the city; the bridges for fifteen miles were broken down, and the boats secured on the opposite bank of the river; the neighbouring peers received orders to raise their tenantry, and hasten to the protection of the royal person; and a reward of one hundred pounds per annum in land was offered for the apprehension of Wyat. That chieftain, with fifteen thousand men under his command, had marched through Dartford to Greenwich and Deptford, when a message from the council, inquiring into the extent of his demands, betrayed their diffidence, and added to his presumption. In the court and the council-room, nothing was to be heard but expressions of mistrust and apprehension; some blamed the precipitancy of Gardiner³ in the change of religion; some the interested policy of the advisers of the Spanish match; and the imperial ambassadors, with the exception of Renard, fearing for their lives, escaped in a merchant-vessel lying in the river. The Queen⁴ alone appeared firm and collected; she betrayed no symptom of fear, no doubt of the result; she ordered her ministers to provide the means of defence, and undertook to fix, by her confidence and address, the wavering loyalty of the Londoners. The lord mayor had called an extraordinary meeting of the citizens; and, at three in the afternoon, Mary, with the sceptre in her hand, and accompanied by her ladies and officers of state, entered the Guildhall. She was received with every demonstration of respect, and, in a firm and dignified tone, complained of the disobedience and insolence of the men of Kent. At first the leaders had condemned her intended marriage with the Prince of

³ *Bishop of Winchester and minister of the Queen.*

⁴ *Mary.*

Spain; now they had betrayed their real design. They demanded the custody of her person, the appointment of her council, and the command of the Tower. Their object was to obtain the exercise of the royal authority, and to abolish the national worship. But she was convinced that her people loved her too well to surrender her into the hands of rebels. "As for this marriage," she continued, "ye shall understand that I enterprised not the doing thereof, without the advice of all our privy council; nor am I, I assure ye, so bent to my own will, or so affectionate, that for my own pleasure I would choose where I lust, or needs must have a husband. I have hitherto lived a maid; and doubt nothing, but with God's grace I am able to live so still. Certainly, did I think that this marriage were to the hurt of you my subjects, or the impeachment of my royal estate, I would never consent thereunto. And, I promise you, on the word of a queen, that, if it shall not appear to the Lords and Commons in parliament to be for the benefit of the whole realm, I will never marry while I live. Wherefore, stand fast against these rebels, your enemies and mine; fear them not, for I assure ye, I fear them nothing at all; and I will leave with you my Lord Howard and my lord admiral, who will be assistant with the mayor for your defence." With these words she departed; the hall rang with acclamations; and by the next morning more than twenty thousand men had enrolled their names for the protection of the city.

The next day Wyatt entered Southwark. But his followers had dwindled to seven thousand men, and were hourly diminishing. No succours had arrived from France; no insurrection had burst forth in any other county; and the royal army was daily strengthened by reinforcements. The batteries erected on the walls of the Tower compelled him to leave Southwark; but he had by this time arranged a

plan with some of the reformers in the city to surprise Ludgate an hour before sunrise; and for that purpose directed his march towards Kingston. Thirty feet of the wooden bridge had been destroyed; but he swam, or prevailed on two seamen to swim, across the river, and, having procured a boat from the opposite bank, laboured with a few associates at the repairs, while his men refreshed themselves in the town. At eleven at night the insurgents passed the bridge; at Brentford they drove in the advanced post of the royalists; but an hour was lost in repairing the carriage of a cannon, and, as it became too late for Wyatt to keep his appointment at Ludgate, the chief of his advisers abandoned him in despair. Among these were Poinet, the Protestant Bishop of Winchester, who now hastened to the Continent; and Sir George Harper, who rode to St. James's, and announced the approach and expectations of Wyatt. He arrived about two hours after midnight. The palace was instantly filled with alarm; the boldness of the attempt gave birth to reports of treason in the city and the court; and the ministers on their knees, particularly the Chancellor, conjured the Queen to provide for her own safety, by retiring into the Tower. But Mary scorned the timidity of her advisers: from the Earl of Pembroke and Lord Clinton she received assurances that they would do their duty; and in return she announced her fixed determination to remain at her post. In a council of war it was decided to place a strong force at Ludgate, to permit the advance of Wyatt, and then to press on him from every quarter, and to inclose him like a wild beast in the toils.

At four in the morning the drum beat to arms; and in a few hours the royalists under Pembroke and Clinton amounted to ten thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry. The hill opposite St. James's was occupied with a battery of cannon and a strong squadron of horse; lower

down, and nearer to Charing Cross, were posted two divisions of infantry; and several smaller parties were detached to different points in the vicinity. About nine, Wyatt reached Hyde Park Corner. Many of his followers who heard of the Queen's proclamation of pardon, had slunk away in the darkness of the night; the rest were appalled at the sight of the formidable array before their eyes. But their leader saw that to recede must be his ruin; he still relied on the co-operation of the conspirators and reformers in the city; and after a short cannonade, seizing a standard, rushed forward to charge the cavalry. They opened; allowed three or four hundred men to pass; and closing, cut off the communication between them and the main body. The insurgents, separated from their leader, did not long sustain the unequal contest; about one hundred were killed, great numbers wounded, and four hundred made prisoners. Wyatt paid no attention to the battle which raged behind his back. Intent on his purpose, he hastened through Piccadilly, insulted the gates of the palace, and proceeded towards the city. No molestation was offered by the armed bands stationed on each side of the street. At Ludgate he knocked, and demanded admittance, "for the Queen had granted all his petitions."—"Avaunt, traitor!" exclaimed from the gallery the Lord William Howard, "thou shalt have no entrance here." Disappointed and confounded, he retraced his steps, till he came opposite the inn called the Bel Savage. There he halted a few minutes. To the spectators he seemed absorbed in thought; but was quickly aroused by the shouts of the combatants, and with forty companions continued to fight his way back, till he reached Temple Bar. He found it occupied by a strong detachment of horse; whatever way he turned, fresh bodies of royalists poured upon him; and Norroy king at arms advancing, exhorted him to spare

the blood of his friends, and to yield himself a prisoner. After a moment's pause, he threw away his sword, and surrendered to Sir Maurice Berkeley, who carried him first to the Court, and thence to the Tower.

XII.

THE PROTESTANT MARTYRS.

GREEN.

[Wyat's revolt brought on the persecution it was intended to avert. Mary looked on all Protestants as traitors, and resolved to destroy Protestantism. A law was passed against heretics, and at once put in force.]

WHETHER from without or from within, warning was wasted on the fierce bigotry of the Queen. It was, as Gardiner asserted, not at the counsel of her ministers, but by her own personal will that the laws against heresy had been laid before Parliament; and now that they were enacted Mary pressed for their execution. Her resolve was probably quickened by the action of the Protestant zealots. The failure of Wyat's revolt was far from taming the enthusiasm of the wilder reformers. The restoration of the old worship was followed by outbreaks of bold defiance. A tailor of St. Giles-in-the-Fields shaved a dog with the priestly tonsure. A cat was found hanging in the Cheap¹ "with her head shorn, and the likeness of a vestment cast over her, with her forefeet tied together, and a round piece of paper like a singing cake between them." Yet more galling were the ballads which were circulated in mockery of the mass, the pamphlets which came from the exiles²

¹ *Cheapside.*

² *Many of the Protestants had fled for safety to Switzerland and Germany.*

over sea, the seditious broadsides dropped in the streets, the interludes³ in which the most sacred acts of the old religion were flouted with ribald mockery. All this defiance only served to quicken afresh the purpose of the Queen. But it was not till the opening of 1555, when she had already been a year and a half on the throne, that the opposition of her councillors was at last mastered, and the persecution began. In February the deprived Bishop of Gloucester, Hooper, was burned in his cathedral city, a London vicar, Lawrence Saunders, at Coventry, and Rogers, a prebendary of St. Paul's, at London. Ferrar, the deprived Bishop of St. David's, who was burned at Caermarthen, was one of eight victims who suffered in March. Four followed in April and May, six in June, eleven in July, eighteen in August, eleven in September. In October Ridley, the deprived Bishop of London, was drawn with Latimer from their prison at Oxford. "Play the man, Master Ridley!" cried the old preacher of the Reformation, as the flames shot up around him; "we shall this day light up such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out."

If the Protestants had not known how to govern indeed, they knew how to die; and the cause which prosperity had ruined revived in the dark hour of persecution. The memory of their violence and greed faded away as they passed unwavering to their doom. Such a story as that of Rowland Taylor, the vicar of Hadleigh, tells us more of the work which was now begun, and of the effect it was likely to produce, than pages of historic dissertation. Taylor, who as a man of mark had been one of the first victims chosen for execution, was arrested in London, and condemned to suffer in his own parish. His wife, "suspecting that her husband should that night be carried away," had

³ *Rhyming plays.*

waited through the darkness with her children in the porch of St. Botolph's-beside-Aldgate.

"Now when the sheriff and his company came against St. Botolph's Church, Elizabeth cried, saying, 'O my dear father! Mother! mother! here is my father led away!' Then cried his wife, 'Rowland, Rowland, where art thou?' or it was a very dark morning, that the one could not see the other. Dr. Taylor answered, 'I am here, dear wife,' and stayed. The sheriff's men would have led him forth, but the sheriff said, 'Stay a little, masters, I pray you, and let him speak to his wife.' Then came she to him, and he took his daughter Mary in his arms, and he and his wife and Elizabeth knelt down and said the Lord's Prayer. At which sight the sheriff wept apace, and so did divers others of the company. After they had prayed, he rose up and kissed his wife and shook her by the hand, and said, 'Farewell, my dear wife, be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience! God shall still be a father to my children.' . . . Then said his wife, 'God be with thee, dear Rowland! I will, with God's grace, meet thee at Hadleigh.'

"All the way Dr. Taylor was merry and cheerful as one that accounted himself going to a most pleasant banquet or bridal. . . . Coming within two miles of Hadleigh he desired to light off his horse, which done, he leaped and set a frisk or twain as men commonly do for dancing. 'Why, Master Doctor,' quoth the sheriff, 'how do you now?' He answered, 'Well, God be praised, Master Sheriff, never better, for now I know that I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father's house!' The streets of Hadleigh were beset on both sides with men and women of the town and country who waited to see him whom when they beheld led to death, with weeping eyes and lamentable voices, they cried, 'Ah, good Lord! there goeth our good shepherd

from us !'” The journey was at last over. “ ‘What place is this,’ he asked, ‘and what meaneth it that so much people are gathered together?’ It was answered, ‘It is Oldham Common, the place where you must suffer, and the people are come to look upon you.’ Then said he, ‘Thanked be God, I am even at home!’ But when the people saw his reverend and ancient face, with a long white beard, they burst out with weeping tears and cried, saying, ‘God save thee, good Dr. Taylor; God strengthen thee, and help thee; the Holy Ghost comfort thee!’ He wished, but was not suffered, to speak. When he had prayed, he went to the stake and kissed it, and set himself into a pitch-barrel which they had set for him to stand on, and so stood with his back upright against the stake, with his hands folded together and his eyes towards heaven, and so let himself be burned.” One of the executioners cruelly cast a faggot at him, which hit upon his head and brake his face that the blood ran down his visage. Then said Dr. Taylor, “Oh friend, I have harm enough, what needed that?” One more act of brutality brought his sufferings to an end. “So stood he still without either crying or moving, with his hands folded together, till Soyce with a halberd struck him on the head that the brains fell out, and the dead corpse fell down into the fire.”

The terror of death was powerless against men like these. Bonner, the Bishop of London, to whom, as bishop of the diocese in which the Council sate, its victims were generally delivered for execution, but who, in spite of the nickname and hatred which his official prominence in the work of death earned him, seems to have been naturally a good-humoured and merciful man, asked a youth who was brought before him whether he thought he could bear the fire. The boy at once held his hand without flinching in the flame of a candle that stood by. Rogers, a fellow

worker with Tyndale in the translation of the Bible, and one of the foremost among the Protestant preachers, died bathing his hands in the flame "as if it had been in cold water." Even the commonest lives gleamed for a moment into poetry at the stake. "Pray for me," a boy, William Brown, who had been brought home to Brentwood to suffer, asked of the bystanders. "I will pray no more for thee," one of them replied, "than I will pray for a dog." "'Then,' said William, 'Son of God, shine upon me;'" and immediately the sun in the elements shone out of a dark cloud so full in his face that he was constrained to look another way; whereat the people mused because it was so dark a little time before." Brentwood lay within a district on which the hand of the Queen fell heavier than elsewhere. The persecution was mainly confined to the more active and populous parts of the country, to London, Kent, Sussex, and the Eastern Counties. Of the two hundred and eighty whom we know to have suffered during the last three years and a half of Mary's reign more than forty were burned in London, seventeen in the neighbouring village of Stratford-le-Bow, four in Islington, two in Southwark, and one each at Barnet, St. Albans, and Ware. Kent, at that time a home of mining and manufacturing industry, suffered as heavily as London. Of its sixty martyrs more than forty were furnished by Canterbury, which was then but a city of some few thousand inhabitants, and seven by Maidstone. The remaining eight suffered at Rochester, Ashford, and Dartford. Of the twenty-five who died in Sussex, the little town of Lewes sent seventeen to the fire. Seventy were contributed by the Eastern Counties, the seat of the woollen manufacture. Beyond these districts executions were rare. Westward of Sussex we find the record of but a dozen martyrdoms, six of which were at Bristol, and four at Salisbury. Chester and Wales contributed but four

sufferers to the list. In the Midland Counties between the Thames and the Humber only twenty-four suffered martyrdom. North of the Humber we find the names of but two Yorkshiremen, burned at Bedale.

XIII.

PHILIP OF SPAIN.

MACAULAY.

[The persecution ended with Mary's death; and her sister Elizabeth, who succeeded her, again restored Protestantism to its old supremacy. The reign of Elizabeth was the greatest in our history; and under her England rose to a power and grandeur it had never known before. During the earlier part of her reign she had to struggle against Mary Stuart, the Queen of Scotland, who claimed her throne, and was backed by the English Catholics; in her later years she had to struggle against Philip of Spain. Philip was eager to crush Protestantism in Western Europe, and this could only be done by crushing England. He was still more anxious to keep Englishmen out of the seas of the New World, which he claimed as his own. The contest with Philip was the greatest war which England had ever waged: and it was in fighting him that she laid the foundation of her empire over the sea.]

THE empire of Philip the Second was undoubtedly one of the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world. In Europe, he ruled Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands on both sides of the Rhine, Franche Comté, Roussillon, the Milanese, and the Two Sicilies. Tuscany, Parma, and the other small states of Italy, were as completely dependent on him as the Nizam and the Rajah of Berar now are on the East India Company. In Asia, the King of Spain was master of the Philippines and of all those rich

settlements which the Portuguese had made on the coast of Malabar and Coromandel, in the Peninsula of Malacca, and in the Spice-Islands of the Eastern Archipelago.¹ In America his dominions extended on each side of the equator into the temperate zone. There is reason to believe that his annual revenue amounted, in the season of his greatest power, to a sum near ten times as large as that which England yielded to Elizabeth. He had a standing army of fifty thousand excellent troops, at a time when England had not a single battalion in constant pay. His ordinary naval force consisted of a hundred and forty galleys. He held, what no other prince in modern times has held, the dominion both of the land and of the sea. During the greater part of his reign, he was supreme on both elements. His soldiers marched up to the capital of France ; his ships menaced the shores of England.

It is no exaggeration to say that, during several years, his power over Europe was greater than even that of Napoleon. The influence of the French conqueror never extended beyond low-water mark. The narrowest strait was to his power what it was of old believed that a running stream was to the sorceries of a witch. While his army entered every metropolis from Moscow to Lisbon, the English fleets blockaded every port from Dantzic to Trieste. Sicily, Sardinia, Majorca, Guernsey, enjoyed security through the whole course of a war which endangered every throne on the Continent. The victorious and imperial nation which had filled its museums with the spoils of Antwerp, of Florence, and of Rome, was suffering painfully from the want of luxuries which use had made necessities. While pillars and arches were rising to commemorate the French conquests, the conquerors were trying to manufacture coffee out of succory and sugar out of beet-root. The influence

¹ *Philip conquered Portugal and seized its colonies.*

of Philip on the Continent was as great as that of Napoleon. The Emperor of Germany was his kinsman. France, torn by religious dissensions, was never a formidable opponent, and was sometimes a dependent ally. At the same time Spain had what Napoleon desired in vain, ships, colonies, and commerce. She long monopolised the trade of America and of the Indian Ocean. All the gold of the West, and all the spices of the East, were received and distributed by her. During many years of war her commerce was interrupted only by the predatory enterprises of a few roving privateers. Even after the defeat of the Armada English statesmen continued to look with great dread on the maritime power of Philip. "The King of Spain," said the Lord Keeper to the two Houses in 1593, "since he hath usurped upon the kingdom of Portugal, hath thereby grown mighty, by gaining the East Indies : so as, how great soever he was before, he is now thereby manifestly more great : . . . He keepeth a navy armed to impeach all trade of merchandise from England to Gascoigne and Guienne, which he attempted to do this last vintage ; so as he is now become as a frontier enemy to all the west of England, as well as all the south parts, as Sussex, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight. Yea, by means of his interest in St. Maloes, a port full of shipping for the war, he is a dangerous neighbour to the Queen's isles of Jersey and Guernsey, ancient possessions of this crown, and never conquered in the greatest wars with France."

The ascendancy which Spain then had in Europe was, in one sense, well deserved. It was an ascendancy which had been gained by unquestioned superiority in all the arts of policy and of war. In the sixteenth century, Italy was not more decidedly the land of the fine arts, Germany was not more decidedly the land of bold theological speculation, than Spain was the land of statesmen and of soldiers. The

character which Virgil has ascribed to his countrymen might have been claimed by the grave and haughty chiefs who surrounded the throne of Ferdinand the Catholic and of his immediate successors. That majestic art, "regere imperio populos," was not better understood by the Romans in the proudest days of their republic than by Gonsalvo and Ximenes, Cortes and Alva. The skill of the Spanish diplomatists was renowned throughout Europe. In England the name of Gondomar is still remembered. The sovereign nation was unrivalled both in regular and irregular warfare. The impetuous chivalry of France, the serried phalanx of Switzerland, were alike found wanting when brought face to face with the Spanish infantry. In the wars of the New World, where something different from ordinary strategy was required in the general and something different from ordinary discipline in the soldier, where it was every day necessary to meet by some new expedient the varying tactics of a barbarous enemy, the Spanish adventurers, sprung from the common people, displayed a fertility of resource, and a talent for negotiation and command, to which history scarcely affords a parallel.

The Castilian of those times was to the Italian what the Roman, in the days of the greatness of Rome, was to the Greek. The conqueror had less ingenuity, less taste, less delicacy of perception than the conquered; but far more pride, firmness, and courage, a more solemn demeanour, a stronger sense of honour. The subject had more subtlety in speculation, the ruler more energy in action. The vices of the former were those of a coward; the vices of the latter were those of a tyrant. It may be added, that the Spaniard, like the Roman, did not disdain to study the arts and the language of those whom he oppressed. A revolution took place in the literature of Spain, not unlike that revolution which, as Horace tells us, took place in the

poetry of Latium. The slave took prisoner the enslaver. The old Castilian ballads gave place to sonnets in the style of Petrarch and to heroic poems in the stanza of Ariosto, as the national songs of Rome were driven out by imitations of Theocritus and translations from Menander.

In no modern society, not even in England during the reign of Elizabeth, has there been so great a number of men eminent at once in literature and in the pursuits of active life, as Spain produced during the sixteenth century. Almost every distinguished writer was also distinguished as a soldier or politician. Boscan bore arms with high reputation. Garcilaso de Vega, the author of the sweetest and most graceful pastoral poem of modern times, after a short but splendid military career, fell sword in hand at the head of a storming party. Alonzo de Ercilla bore a conspicuous part in that war of Arauco, which he afterwards celebrated in one of the best heroic poems that Spain has produced. Hurtado de Mendoza, whose poems have been compared to those of Horace, and whose charming little novel is evidently the model of *Gil Blas*, has been handed down to us by history as one of the sternest of those iron proconsuls who were employed by the House of Austria to crush the lingering public spirit of Italy. Lope sailed in the Armada; Cervantes² was wounded at Lepanto.³

It is curious to consider with how much awe our ancestors in those times regarded a Spaniard. He was, in their apprehension, a kind of dæmon, horribly malevolent, but withal most sagacious and powerful. "They be very wyse and politicke," says an honest Englishman, in a memorial addressed to Mary, "and can, thorowe ther wysdome, reform and brydell theyr owne natures for a tyme, and applye their conditions to the maners of those men with whom

² The author of "*Don Quixote*." ³ Philip's fleet, with the Venetians, overthrew the Turks at Lepanto.

they meddell gladlye by friendshippe ; whose mischievous maners a man shall never knowe untill he come under ther subjection ; but then shall he perfectlye parceyve and fele them : which thyng I praye God England never do : for in dissimulations untill they have ther purposes, and afterwards in oppression and tyrannye, when they can obtayne them, they do exceed all other nations upon the earthe." This is just such language as Arminius⁴ would have used about the Romans, or as an Indian statesman of our times might use about the English. It is the language of a man burning with hatred, but cowed by those whom he hates ; and painfully sensible of their superiority, not only in power, but in intelligence.

XIV.

RALEIGH AND VIRGINIA

BANCROFT.

[While men like Drake were challenging Spain upon the seas, wiser and nobler Englishmen were striving to plant colonies which should make the New World English instead of Spanish ground. Of these the chief were Sir Humphry Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh. Unsuccessful as they were, it was through their efforts that the first settlements were founded, which have since grown into the United States of North America.]

WHILE the Queen and her adventurers were dazzled by dreams of finding gold in the frozen regions of the north,¹ Sir Humphrey Gilbert, with a sounder judgment and better knowledge, watched the progress of the fisheries,² and formed healthy plans for colonisation. He had been a soldier and

⁴ *Arminius headed the resistance of the Germans to Rome.*

¹ *Frobisher and other adventurers had hoped to find gold in Labrador.* ² *Of Newfoundland and the North American coast.*

a member of parliament ; had written judiciously on navigation ; and, though censured for his ignorance of the principles of liberty, was esteemed for the sincerity of his piety. Free alike from fickleness and fear, danger never turned him aside from the pursuit of honour or the service of his sovereign ; for he knew that death is inevitable, and the fame of virtue immortal. It was not difficult for him in June, 1578, to obtain a patent, formed according to the commercial theories of that day, and to be of perpetual efficacy, if a plantation should be established within six years. To the people who might belong to his colony, the rights of Englishmen were promised ; to Gilbert, the possession for himself or his assigns of the soil which he might discover, and the sole jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, of the territory within two hundred leagues of his settlement, with supreme executive and legislative authority. Under this patent, Gilbert collected a company of volunteer adventurers, contributing largely from his own fortune to the preparations. Jarrings and divisions ensued, before the voyage was begun ; many abandoned what they had inconsiderately undertaken ; in 1579, the general and a few of his assured friends—among them, his step-brother, Walter Raleigh—put to sea : one of his ships was lost ; and misfortune compelled the remainder to return. Gilbert attempted to keep his patent alive by making grants of land : none of his assigns succeeded in establishing a colony ; and he was himself too much impoverished to renew his efforts.

But the pupil of Coligny³ delighted in hazardous adventure. To prosecute discoveries in the New World, lay the foundation of states, and acquire immense domains, appeared to Raleigh an easy design, which would not interfere with the

³ *Sir Walter Raleigh, who had served under the Huguenot general Coligny in the French wars of religion. He was Gilbert's half-brother.*

pursuit of favour in England. Before the limit of the charter had expired, Gilbert, assisted by his brother, equipped a new squadron. In 1583 the fleet embarked under happy omens; the commander, on the eve of his departure, received from Elizabeth, as a token of regard, a golden anchor guided by a lady. A man of letters from Hungary accompanied the expedition; and some part of the United States would have then been colonised but for a succession of overwhelming disasters. Two days after leaving Plymouth the largest ship in the fleet, which had been furnished by Raleigh, who himself remained in England, deserted under a pretence of infectious disease, and returned into harbour. Gilbert, incensed but not intimidated, sailed for Newfoundland; and, in August, entering St. John's, he summoned the Spaniards and Portuguese,⁴ and other strangers, to witness the ceremonies by which he took possession of the country for his sovereign. A pillar, on which the arms of England were infixd, was raised as a monument; the lands were granted to the fishermen in fee, on condition of the payment of a quit-rent. It was generally agreed that "the mountains made a show of mineral substance;" the "mineral-man" of the expedition, an honest and religious Saxon, protested on his life that silver ore abounded. He was charged to keep the discovery a profound secret; and the precious ore was carried on board the larger ship with such mystery that the dull Portuguese and Spaniards suspected nothing of the matter.

It was not easy for Gilbert to preserve order in the little fleet. Many of the mariners, infected with the vices which at that time degraded their profession, were no better than pirates, and were perpetually bent upon pillaging whatever chips fell in their way. At length, having abandoned one

⁴ *The Spaniards and Portuguese claimed all the New World for their own.*

of their barks, the English, now in three vessels only, sailed on further discoveries, intending to visit the coast of the United States. But they had not proceeded towards the south beyond the latitude of Wiscasset, when the largest ship, from the carelessness of the crew, struck and was wrecked. Nearly a hundred men perished; the "mineral-man" and the ore were all lost; nor was it possible to rescue Parmenius, the Hungarian scholar, who should have been the historian of the expedition. It now seemed necessary to hasten to England. Gilbert had sailed in the *Squirrel*, a bark of ten tons only, and therefore convenient for entering harbours and approaching the coast. On the homeward voyage, he would not forsake his little company, with whom he had encountered so many storms and perils. A desperate resolution! The weather was extremely rough; the oldest mariner had never seen "more outrageous seas." The little frigate, not more than twice as large as the long-boat of a merchantman, "too small a bark to pass through the ocean sea at that season of the year," was nearly wrecked. That same night about twelve o'clock its lights suddenly disappeared; and neither the vessel nor any of the crew was ever again seen. The *Hind* reached Falmouth in safety.

Raleigh, not disheartened by the sad fate of his step-brother, revolved a settlement in the milder clime from which the Protestants of France had been expelled. He readily obtained from Elizabeth, in March, 1584, a patent as ample as that which had been conferred on Gilbert. It was drawn according to the principles of feudal law, and with strict regard to the Christian faith, as professed in the church of England. Raleigh was constituted a lord proprietary, with almost unlimited powers; holding his territories by homage and an inconsiderable rent, and possessing jurisdiction over an extensive region, of which he had power to make grants according to his pleasure. Expectations rose high, since the

balmy regions of the south were now to be colonised. Two vessels, well laden with men and provisions, under the command of Philip Amidas and Arthur Barlow, buoyant with hope, set sail for the New World. They pursued the circuitous route by the Canaries and the islands of the West Indies; after a short stay at those islands, they sailed for the north, and were soon opposite the shores of Carolina. As in July they drew near land, the fragrance was "as if they had been in the midst of some delicate garden, abounding with all kinds of odoriferous flowers." Ranging the coast for one hundred and twenty miles, they entered the first convenient harbour, and, after thanks to God for their safe arrival, they took possession of the country for the Queen of England.

The spot on which this ceremony was performed was in the island of Wocoken, the southernmost of the islands forming Ocracoke Inlet. The shores of North Carolina, at some periods of the year, cannot safely be approached by a fleet, from the hurricanes against which the formation of the coast offers no secure roadsteads and harbours. But in the month of July the air was agitated by none but the gentlest breezes, and the English commanders were in raptures with the beauty of the ocean, seen in the magnificence of repose, gemmed with islands, and expanding in the clearest transparency from cape to cape. The vegetation of that southern latitude struck the beholders with admiration; the trees had not their paragons; luxuriant climbers gracefully festooned the loftiest cedars; wild grapes abounded; and natural arbours formed an impervious shade, that not a ray of the suns of July could penetrate. The forests were filled with birds; and, at the discharge of an arquebuse, whole flocks would arise, uttering a cry, as if an army of men had shouted together.

The gentleness of the tawny inhabitants⁵ appeared in harmony with the loveliness of the scene. The desire of

⁵ *The Indians of North America.*

traffic overcame their timidity, and the English received a friendly welcome. On the island of Roanoke, they were entertained by the wife of Granganimeo, father of Wingina, the king, with the refinements of Arcadian hospitality. "The people were most gentle, loving and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the golden age." They had no cares but to guard against the moderate cold of a short winter, and to gather such food as the earth almost spontaneously produced. And yet it was added, with singular want of comparison, that the wars of these guileless men were cruel and bloody; that domestic dissensions had almost exterminated whole tribes; that they employed the basest stratagems against their enemies; and that the practice of inviting men to a feast, to murder them in the hour of confidence, was not exclusively a device of European bigots, but was known to the natives of Secotan. The English, too, were solicited to engage in a similar enterprise under promise of lucrative booty.

The adventurers were satisfied with observing the general aspect of the New World; no extensive examination of the coast was undertaken; Pamlico and Albemarle Sound and Roanoke Island were explored, and some information gathered by inquiries from the Indians; the commanders had not the courage or the activity to survey the country with exactness. Having made but a short stay in America, they arrived in September in the west of England, accompanied by Manteo and Wanchese, two natives of the wilderness; and the returning voyagers gave such glowing descriptions of their discoveries as might be expected from men who had done no more than sail over the smooth waters of a summer's sea, among "the hundred islands" of North Carolina. Elizabeth esteemed her reign signalized by the discovery of the enchanting regions, and, as a memorial of her state of life, named them Virginia.

XV.

THE FIRST DAY'S FIGHT WITH THE ARMADA.

MOTLEY.

[Philip at last resolved to make an effort for the conquest of England, and gathered a great fleet in the Tagus, and an army in Flanders, for that purpose. The Armada, as the fleet was called, was ordered to sail through the Channel to the Flemish coast to join the army there, and protect its crossing to England. After long delays the Spaniards put to sea, and the vast armament entered the Channel.]

ON Friday, the 29th of July, 1588, off the Lizard, the Spaniards had their first glimpse of the land of promise presented them by Sixtus V.,¹ of which they had at last come to take possession. On the same day and night the blaze and smoke of ten thousand beacon-fires from the Land's End to Margate, and from the Isle of Wight to Cumberland, gave warning to every Englishman that the enemy was at last upon them. Almost at that very instant intelligence had been brought from the court to the Lord-Admiral² at Plymouth, that the Armada, dispersed and shattered by the gales of June, was not likely to make its appearance that year; and orders had consequently been given to disarm the four largest ships and send them into dock. Even the shrewd Walsingham³ had participated in this strange delusion. Before Howard had time of act upon this ill-timed suggestion—even had he been disposed to do so—he received authentic intelligence that the

¹ *The Pope, who had aided the enterprise, and promised it success.*

² *Lord Howard of Effingham, whose fleet lay at Plymouth.*

With him were Drake, Frobisher, and other great seamen.

³ *Elizabeth's foreign secretary.*

great fleet was off the Lizard. Neither he nor Francis Drake were the men to lose time in such an emergency, and before that Friday night was spent, sixty of the best English ships had been warped out of Plymouth harbour.

On Saturday, 30th July, the wind was very light at south-west, with a mist and drizzling rain, but by three in the afternoon the two fleets could descry and count each other through the haze.

By nine o'clock, 31st July, about two miles from Looe, on the Cornish coast, the fleets had their meeting. There were 136 sail of the Spaniards, of which ninety were large ships, and sixty-seven of the English. It was a solemn moment. The long-expected Armada presented a pompous, almost a theatrical appearance. The ships seemed arranged for a pageant in honour of a victory already won. Disposed in form of a crescent, the horns of which were seven miles asunder, those gilded, towered, floating castles, with their gaudy standards and their martial music, moved slowly along the Channel with an air of indolent pomp. Their captain-general, the Golden Duke,⁴ stood in his private shot-proof fortress on the deck of his great galleon the *Saint Martin*, surrounded by generals of infantry and colonels of cavalry, who knew as little as he did himself of naval matters. The English vessels, on the other hand—with a few exceptions, light, swift, and easily handled—could sail round and round those unwieldy galleons, hulks, and galleys rowed by fettered slave-gangs. The superior seamanship of free Englishmen, commanded by such experienced captains as Drake, Frobisher, and Hawkins—from infancy at home on blue water—was manifest in the very first encounter. They obtained the weather-gage at once, and cannonaded the enemy at intervals with considerable effect, easily escaping at will out of range of the sluggish Armada, which was incapable of

⁴ *The Duke of Medina-Sidonia, who commanded the Armada.*

bearing sail in pursuit, although provided with an armament which could sink all its enemies at close quarters. "We had some small fight with them that Sunday afternoon," said Hawkins.

Medina-Sidonia hoisted the royal standard at the fore, and the whole fleet did its utmost, which was little, to offer general battle. It was in vain. The English, following at the heels of the enemy, refused all such invitations, and attacked only the rear-guard of the Armada, where Recalde commanded. That admiral, steadily maintaining his post, faced his nimble antagonists, who continued to tease, to maltreat, and to elude him, while the rest of the fleet proceeded slowly up the Channel, closely followed by the enemy. And thus the running fight continued along the coast, in full view of Plymouth, whence boats with reinforcements and volunteers were perpetually arriving to the English ships, until the battle had drifted quite out of reach of the town.

Already in this first "small fight" the Spaniards had learned a lesson, and might even entertain a doubt of their invincibility. But before the sun-set there were more serious disasters. Much powder and shot had been expended by the Spaniards to very little purpose, and so a master-gunner on board Admiral Oquendo's flag-ship was reprimanded for careless ball-practice. The gunner, who was a Fleming, enraged with his captain, laid a train to the powder-magazine, fired it, and threw himself into the sea. The two decks blew up. The great castle at the stern rose into the clouds, carrying with it the paymaster-general of the fleet, a large portion of treasure, and nearly two hundred men. The ship was a wreck, but it was possible to save the rest of the crew. So Medina-Sidonia sent light vessels to remove them, and wore with his flagship to defend Oquendo, who had already been fastened upon by his English pursuers. But

the Spaniards, not being so light in hand as their enemies involved themselves in much embarrassment by this manœuvre; and there was much falling foul of each other, entanglement of rigging, and carrying away of yards. Oquendo's men, however, were ultimately saved, and taken to other ships.

Meantime Don Pedro de Valdez, commander of the Andalusian squadron, having got his galleon into collision with two or three Spanish ships successively, had at last carried away his fore-mast close to the deck, and the wreck had fallen against his main-mast. He lay crippled and helpless, the Armada was slowly deserting him, night was coming on, the sea was running high, and the English, ever hovering near, were ready to grapple with him. In vain did Don Pedro fire signals of distress. The captain-general—even as though the unlucky galleon had not been connected with the Catholic fleet—calmly fired a gun to collect his scattered ships, and abandoned Valdez to his fate. "He left me comfortless in sight of the whole fleet," said poor Pedro, "and greater inhumanity and unthankfulness I think was never heard of among men."

Yet the Spaniard comported himself most gallantly. Frobisher, in the largest ship of the English fleet, the *Triumph*, of 1100 tons, and Hawkins in the *Victory*, of 800, cannonaded him at a distance, but, night coming on, he was able to resist; and it was not till the following morning that he surrendered to the *Revenge*.

Drake then received the gallant prisoner on board his flagship—much to the disgust and indignation of Frobisher and Hawkins, thus disappointed of their prize and ransom-money—treated him with much courtesy, and gave his word of honour that he and his men should be treated fairly, like good prisoners of war. This pledge was redeemed, for it was not the English, as it was the Spanish custom, to convert

captives into slaves, but only to hold them for ransom. Valdez responded to Drake's politeness by kissing his hand, embracing him, and overpowering him with magnificent compliments. He was then sent on board the Lord-Admiral, who received him with similar urbanity, and expressed his regret that so distinguished a personage should have been so coolly deserted by the Duke of Medina. Don Pedro then returned to the *Revenge*, where, as the guest of Drake, he was a witness to all subsequent events up to the 10th of August, on which day he was sent to London with some other officers, Sir Francis claiming his ransom as his lawful due.

Here certainly was no very triumphant beginning for the Invincible Armada. On the very first day of their being in presence of the English fleet—then but sixty-seven in number, and vastly their inferior in size and weight of metal—they had lost the flagships of the Guipuzcoan and of the Andalusian squadrons, with a general-admiral, 450 officers and men, and some 100,000 ducats of treasure. They had been out-manceuvred, out-sailed, and thoroughly maltreated by their antagonists, and they had been unable to inflict a single blow in return.

XVI.

THE LAST DAY'S FIGHT WITH THE ARMADA.

MOTLEY.

[Throughout a whole week the running fight went on, the Armada slowly making its way along the Channel, the English ships hanging on its rear. Many Spanish ships were sunk or taken; but the great fleet still remained formidable when, in spite of its enemies, it at last reached

the Flemish coast. If it was to be prevented from embarking the army which was destined for the invasion of England, a great engagement was now necessary; and the English seamen resolved to engage.]

THE Lord-Admiral, who had been lying off and on, now bore away with all his force in pursuit of the Spaniards. The Invincible Armada, already sorely crippled, was standing N.N.E. directly before a fresh topsail breeze from the S.S.W. The English came up with them soon after nine o'clock A.M. off Gravelines, and found them sailing in a half-moon, the admiral and vice-admiral in the centre, and the flanks protected by the three remaining galleasses and by the great galleons of Portugal.

Seeing the enemy approaching, Medina Sidonia ordered his whole fleet to luff to the wind, and prepare for action. The wind, shifting a few points, was now at W.N.W., so that the English had both the weather-gage and the tide in their favour. A general combat began at about ten, and it was soon obvious to the Spaniards that their adversaries were intending warm work. Sir Francis Drake in the *Revenge*, followed by Frobisher in the *Triumph*, Hawkins in the *Victory*, and some smaller vessels, made the first attack upon the Spanish flagships. Lord Henry in the *Rainbow*, Sir Henry Palmer in the *Antelope*, and others, engaged with three of the largest galleons of the Armada, while Sir William Winter in the *Vanguard*, supported by most of his squadron, charged the starboard wing.

The portion of the fleet thus assaulted fell back into the main body. Four of the ships ran foul of each other, and Winter, driving into their centre, found himself within musket-shot of many of their most formidable ships.

"I tell you, on the credit of a poor gentleman," he said, "that there were five hundred discharges of demi-cannon, culverin, and demi-culverin, from the *Vanguard*; and when

I was farthest off in firing my pieces, I was not out of shot of their harquebus, and most time within speech, one of another."

The battle lasted six hours long, hot and furious ; for now there was no excuse for retreat on the part of the Spaniards, but, on the contrary, it was the intention of the Captain-General to return to his station off Calais,¹ if it were within his power. Nevertheless the English still partially maintained the tactics which had proved so successful, and resolutely refused the fierce attempts of the Spaniards to lay themselves alongside. Keeping within musket-range, the well-disciplined English mariners poured broadside after broadside against the towering ships of the Armada, which afforded so easy a mark ; while the Spaniards, on their part, found it impossible, while wasting incredible quantities of powder and shot, to inflict any severe damage on their enemies. Throughout the action, not an English ship was destroyed, and not a hundred men were killed. On the other hand, all the best ships of the Spaniards were riddled through and through, and with masts and yards shattered, sails and rigging torn to shreds, and a north-west wind still drifting them towards the fatal sandbanks of Holland, they laboured heavily in a chopping sea, firing wildly, and receiving tremendous punishment at the hands of Howard, Drake, Seymour, Winter, and their followers. Not even master-gunner Thomas could complain that day of "blind exercise" on the part of the English, with "little harm done" to the enemy. There was scarcely a ship in the Armada that did not suffer severely ; for nearly all were engaged in that memorable action off the sands of Gravelines. The Captain-General himself, Admiral Recalde, Alonzo de Leyva, Oquendo, Diego Flores de Valdez, Bertendona,

¹ *From which he had been driven the day before by English fire-ships.*

Don Francisco de Toledo, Don Diego de Pimentel, Telles Enriquez, Alonzo de Luzon, Garibay, with most of the great galleons and galeasses, were in the thickest of the fight, and one after the other each of those huge ships was disabled. Three sank before the fight was over, many others were soon drifting helpless wrecks towards a hostile shore, and, before five o'clock in the afternoon, at least sixteen of their best ships had been sacrificed, and from four to five thousand soldiers killed.

Nearly all the largest vessels of the Armada, therefore, having been disabled or damaged—according to a Spanish eye-witness—and all their small shot exhausted, Medina Sidonia reluctantly gave orders to retreat. The Captain-General was a bad sailor, but he was a chivalrous Spaniard of ancient Gothic blood, and he felt deep mortification at the plight of his invincible fleet, together with undisguised resentment against Alexander Farnese,² through whose treachery and incapacity he considered the great Catholic cause to have been so foully sacrificed. Crippled, maltreated, and diminished in number, as were his ships, he would have still faced the enemy, but the winds and currents were fast driving him on the lee-shore, and the pilots, one and all, assured him that it would be inevitable destruction to remain. After a slight and very ineffectual attempt to rescue Don Diego de Pimentel in the *St. Matthew*—who refused to leave his disabled ship—and Don Francisco de Toledo, whose great galleon, the *St. Philip*, was fast driving, a helpless wreck, towards Zeeland, the Armada bore away N.N.E. into the open sea, leaving those who could not follow to their fate.

The *St. Matthew*, in a sinking condition, hailed a Dutch fisherman, who was offered a gold chain to pilot her into

² *The Prince of Parma, who commanded the Spanish army in Flanders, and who had not succeeded in joining the Armada.*

Newport. But the fisherman, being a patriot, steered her close to the Holland fleet, where she was immediately assaulted by Admiral Van der Does, to whom, after a two hours' bloody fight, she struck her flag. Don Diego, marshal of the camp to the famous legion of Sicily, brother of the Marquis of Tavera, nephew of the Viceroy of Sicily, uncle to the Viceroy of Naples, and numbering as many titles, dignities, and high affinities, as could be expected of a grandee of the first class, was taken, with his officers, to the Hague. "I was the means," said Captain Borlase, "that the best sort were saved, and the rest were cast overboard and slain at our entry. He fought with us two hours, and hurt divers of our men, but at last yielded."

John Van der Does, his captor, presented the banner of the *St. Matthew* to the great church of Leyden, where—such was its prodigious length—it hung from ceiling to floor without being entirely unrolled; and there it hung, from generation to generation, a worthy companion to the Spanish flags which had been left behind when Valdez abandoned the siege of that heroic city fifteen years before.

The galleon *St. Philip*, one of the four largest ships in the Armada, dismasted and foundering, drifted towards Newport, where camp-marshal Don Francisco de Toledo hoped in vain for succour. La Motte made a feeble attempt at rescue, but some vessels from the Holland fleet, being much more active, seized the unfortunate galleon, and carried her into Flushing. The captors found forty-eight brass cannon and other things of value on board, but there were some casks of Ribadavia wine which was more fatal to her enemies than those pieces of artillery had proved. For while the rebels were refreshing themselves, after the fatigues of the capture, with large draughts of that famous vintage, the *St. Philip*, which had been bored through and through with English shot, and had been rapidly filling with water, gave a sudden

lurch, and went down in a moment, carrying with her to the bottom three hundred of those convivial Hollanders.

A large Biscay galleon, too, of Recalde's squadron, much disabled in action, and now, like many others, unable to follow the Armada, was summoned by Captain Cross, of the *Hope*, forty-eight guns, to surrender. Although foundering, she resisted, and refused to strike her flag. One of her officers attempted to haul down her colours, and was run through the body by the captain, who, in his turn, was struck dead by a brother of the officer thus slain. In the midst of this quarrel the ship went down with all her crew.

Six hours and more, from ten till nearly five, the fight had lasted—a most cruel battle, as the Spaniards declared. There were men in the Armada who had served in the action of Lepanto, and who declared that famous encounter to have been far surpassed in severity and spirit by this fight off Gravelines. “Surely every man in our fleet did well,” said Winter, “and the slaughter the enemy received was great.” Nor would the Spaniards have escaped even worse punishment, had not, most unfortunately, the penurious policy of the Queen's government rendered her ships useless at last, even in this supreme moment. They never ceased cannonading the discomfited enemy until the ammunition was exhausted. “When the cartridges were all spent,” said Winter, “and the munitions in some vessels gone altogether, we ceased fighting, but followed the enemy, who still kept away.” And the enemy—although still numerous, and seeming strong enough, if properly handled, to destroy the whole English fleet—fled before them. There remained more than fifty Spanish vessels, above six hundred tons in size, besides sixty hulks and other vessels of less account; while in the whole English navy were but thirteen ships of or above that burthen. “Their force is wonderful great and

strong," said Howard, "but we pluck their feathers by little and little."

For Medina-Sidonia had now satisfied himself that he should never succeed in boarding those hard-fighting and swift-sailing craft, while, meantime, the horrible panic of Sunday night and the succession of fights throughout the following day, had completely disorganised his followers. Crippled, riddled, shorn, but still numerous, and by no means entirely vanquished, the Armada was flying with a gentle breeze before an enemy who, to save his existence, could not have fired a broadside.

XVII.

SHAKSPERE'S EARLY LIFE.

GREEN.

[While England was thus struggling with Spain, it was winning an even greater glory in letters. Great writers appeared both in prose and poetry; and more than fifty dramatists wrote plays, which gave life to the English stage. Of these the foremost was William Shakspeare.]

OF hardly any great poet indeed do we know so little. For the story of Shakspeare's youth we have only one or two trifling legends, and these almost certainly false. Not a single letter or characteristic saying, not one of the jests "spoken at the Mermaid,"¹ hardly a single anecdote, remain to illustrate his busy life in London. His look and figure in later age have been preserved by the bust over his tomb at Stratford, and a hundred years after his death he was still remembered in his native town; but the minute diligence

¹ *The Mermaid Inn in Bread Street, Cheapside, where the poets met together.*

of later inquirers was able to glean hardly a single detail, even of the most trivial order, which could throw light upon the years of retirement before his death. It is owing perhaps to the harmony and unity of Shakspeare's temper that no salient peculiarity seems to have left its trace on the memory of his contemporaries ; it is the very grandeur of his genius which precludes us from discovering any personal trait in his works. His supposed self-revelation in the Sonnets is so obscure that only a few outlines can be traced even by the boldest conjecture. In his dramas he is all his characters, and his characters range over all mankind. There is not one, or the act or word of one, that we can identify personally with the poet himself.

He was born in 1564, the sixth year of Elizabeth's reign, twelve years after the birth of Spenser, three years later than the birth of Bacon. Marlowe was of the same age with Shakspeare : Greene probably a few years older.² His father, a glover and small farmer of Stratford-on-Avon, was forced by poverty to lay down his office of alderman as his son reached boyhood ; and stress of poverty may have been the cause which drove William Shakspeare, who had already wedded at eighteen a wife older than himself, to London and the stage. His life in the capital can hardly have begun later than in his twenty-third year, the memorable year which preceded the coming of the Armada, and which witnessed the production of Marlowe's "Tamburlaine." If we take the language of the Sonnets as a record of his personal feeling, his new profession as an actor stirred in him only the bitterness of self-contempt. He chides with Fortune "that did not better for my life provide than public means that public manners breed ;" he writhes at the thought that he has "made himself a motley to the view" of the gaping

² *Marlowe gave the first great impulse to English tragedy, Greene to English comedy.*

apprentices in the pit of Blackfriars. "Thence comes it," he adds, "that my name receives a brand, and almost thence my nature is subdued to that it works in." But the application of the words is a more than doubtful one. In spite of petty squabbles with some of his dramatic rivals at the outset of his career, the genial nature of the newcomer seems to have won him a general love among his fellows. In 1592, while still a mere actor and fitter of old plays for the stage, a fellow-playwright, Chettle, answered Greene's attack on him in words of honest affection: "Myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes: besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art." His partner Burbage spoke of him after death as a "worthy friend and fellow;" and Jonson handed down the general tradition of his time when he described him as "indeed honest, and of an open and free nature."

His profession as an actor was at any rate of essential service to him in the poetic career which he soon undertook. Not only did it give him the sense of theatrical necessities which makes his plays so effective on the boards, but it enabled him to bring his pieces as he wrote them to the test of the stage. If there is any truth in Jonson's statement that Shakspeare never blotted a line, there is no justice in the censure which it implies on his carelessness or incorrectness. The conditions of poetic publication were in fact wholly different from those of our own day. A drama remained for years in manuscript as an acting piece, subject to continual revision and amendment; and every rehearsal and representation afforded hints for change which we know the young poet was far from neglecting. The chance which has preserved an earlier edition of his "Hamlet" shows in what an unsparing way Shakspeare could recast even the

finest products of his genius. Five years after the supposed date of his arrival in London he was already famous as a dramatist. Greene speaks bitterly of him under the name of "Shakescene" as an "upstart crow beautified with our feathers," a sneer which points either to his celebrity as an actor or to his preparation for loftier flights by fitting pieces of his predecessors for the stage. He was soon partner in the theatre, actor, and playwright; and another nickname, that of "Johannes Factotum" or Jack-of-all-Trades, shows his readiness to take all honest work which came to hand.

With his publication in 1593 of the poem of "Venus and Adonis," "the first heir of my invention" as Shakspeare calls it, the period of independent creation fairly began. The date of its publication was a very memorable one. The "Faerie Queen" had appeared only three years before, and had placed Spenser without a rival at the head of English poetry. On the other hand the two leading dramatists of the time passed at this moment suddenly away. Greene died in poverty and self-reproach in the house of a poor shoemaker. "Doll," he wrote to the wife he had abandoned, "I charge thee, by the love of our youth and by my soul's rest, that thou wilt see this man paid; for if he and his wife had not succoured me I had died in the streets." "Oh that a year were granted me to live," cried the young poet from his bed of death, "but I must die, of every man abhorred! Time, loosely spent, will not again be won! My time is loosely spent—and I undone!" A year later the death of Marlowe in a street brawl removed the only rival whose powers might have equalled Shakspeare's own. He was now about thirty; and the twenty-three years which elapsed between the appearance of the "Adonis" and his death were filled with a series of masterpieces. Nothing is more characteristic of his genius than its incessant activity. Through the five years which followed the publication of his

early poem he seems to have produced on an average two dramas a year. When we attempt however to trace the growth and progress of the poet's mind in the order of his plays we are met in the case of many of them by an absence of certain information as to the dates of their appearance. The facts on which inquiry has to build are extremely few. "Venus and Adonis," with the "Lucrece," must have been written before their publication in 1593-4; the Sonnets, though not published till 1609, were known in some form among his private friends as early as 1598. His earlier plays are defined by a list given in the "Witt's Treasury" of Francis Meres in 1598, though the omission of a play from a casual catalogue of this kind would hardly warrant us in assuming its necessary non-existence at the time. The works ascribed to him at his death are fixed in the same approximate fashion through the edition published by his fellow-actors. Beyond these meagre facts and our knowledge of the publication of a few of his dramas in his lifetime all is uncertain; and the conclusions which have been drawn from these, and from the dramas themselves, as well as from assumed resemblances with, or reference to, other plays of the period, can only be accepted as approximations to the truth.

The bulk of his lighter comedies and historical dramas can be assigned with fair probability to a period from about 1593, when Shakspeare was known as nothing more than an adapter, to 1598, when they are mentioned in the list of Meres. They bear on them indeed the stamp of youth. In "Love's Labour's Lost" the young playwright, fresh from his own Stratford, its "daisies pied and violets blue," with the gay bright music of its country ditties still in his ears, flings himself into the midst of the brilliant England which gathered round Elizabeth, busying himself as yet for the most part with the surface of it, with the humours and

quixotisms, the whit and the whim, the unreality, the fantastic extravagance, which veiled its inner nobleness. Country-lad as he is, Shakspeare shows himself master of it all; he can patter euphuism and exchange quip and repartee with the best; he is at home in their pedantries and affectations, their brag and their rhetoric, their passion for the fantastic and the marvellous. He can laugh as heartily at the romantic vagaries of the courtly world in which he finds himself as at the narrow dulness, the pompous triflings, of the country world which he has left behind him. But he laughs frankly and without malice; he sees the real grandeur of soul which underlies all this quixotry and word-play; and owns with a smile that when brought face to face with the facts of human life, with the suffering of man or the danger of England, these fops have in them the stuff of heroes. He shares the delight in existence, the pleasure in sheer living, which was so marked a feature of the age; he enjoys the mistakes, the contrasts, the adventures, of the men about him; his fun breaks almost riotously out in the practical jokes of the "Taming of the Shrew" and the endless blunderings of the "Comedy of Errors." In these earlier efforts his work had been marked by little poetic elevation, or by passion. But the easy grace of the dialogue, the dexterous management of a complicated story, the genial gaiety of his tone and the music of his verse, promised a master of social comedy as soon as Shakspeare turned from the superficial aspects of the world about him to find a new delight in the character and actions of men. The interest of human character was still fresh and vivid; the sense of individuality drew a charm from its novelty; and poet and essayist were busy alike in sketching the "humours" of mankind. Shakspeare sketched with his fellows. In the "Two Gentlemen of Verona" his painting

of manners was suffused by a tenderness and ideal beauty which formed an effective protest against the hard though vigorous character-painting which the first success of Ben Jonson in "Every Man in his Humour" brought at the time into fashion. But quick on these lighter comedies followed two in which his genius started fully into life. His poetic power, held in reserve till now, showed itself with a splendid profusion in the brilliant fancies of the "Midsummer Night's Dream;" and passion swept like a tide of resistless delight through "Romeo and Juliet."

XVIII.

THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

BANCROFT.

[The reign of Elizabeth was followed by that of a very different ruler. James the First broke with English religion, quarrelled with the Parliament, and sowed the first seeds of the strife between king and people which was to end in the Great Rebellion. His persecution however of those who would not conform to the Church and its worship brought about a great result. It drove some of them to the New World; and their foundation of the colonies of New England moulded for good the destinies of the United States.]

IN the opening of the reign of James "a poor people" in the north of England, in towns and villages of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and the borders of Yorkshire, in and near Scrooby, had "become enlightened by the word of God." "Presently," we are told by their historian, "they were both scoffed and scorned by the profane multitude; and their ministers, urged with the yoke of subscription," were, by the increase of troubles, led "to see further," that

not only "the beggarly ceremonies were monuments of idolatry," but also "that the lordly power of the prelates ought not to be submitted to." Many of them, therefore, "whose hearts the Lord had touched with heavenly zeal for his truth," resolved, "whatever it might cost them, to shake off the anti-Christian bondage, and, as the Lord's free people, to join themselves by a covenant into a church estate in the fellowship of the gospel." Of the same faith with Calvin, heedless of acts of Parliament, they rejected "the offices and callings, the courts and canons" of bishops, and, renouncing all obedience to human authority in spiritual things, asserted for themselves an unlimited and never-ending right to make advances in truth, and "walk in all the ways which God had made known or should make known to them."

The reformed church chose for one of their ministers John Robinson, "a man not easily to be paralleled," "of a most learned, polished, and modest spirit." Their ruling elder was William Brewster, who "was their special stay and help." They were beset and watched night and day by the agents of prelacy. For about a year they kept their meetings every Sabbath, in one place or another; exercising the worship of God among themselves, notwithstanding all the diligence and malice of their adversaries. But, as the humane ever decline to enforce the laws dictated by bigotry, the office devolves on the fanatic or the savage. Hence the severity of their execution usually surpassed the intention of their authors; and the peaceful members of "the poor, persecuted flock of Christ," despairing of rest in England, resolved to go into exile.

The departure from England was effected with much suffering and hazard. The first attempt, in 1607, was prevented; but the magistrates checked the ferocity of the subordinate officers; and, after a month's arrest of the

whole company, seven only of the principal men were detained a little longer in prison. The next spring the design was renewed. As if it had been a crime to escape from persecution, an unfrequented heath in Lincolnshire, near the mouth of the Humber, was the place of secret meeting. Just as a boat was bearing a part of the emigrants to their ship, a company of horsemen appeared in pursuit, and seized on the helpless women and children who had not yet adventured on the surf. "Pitiful it was to see the heavy case of these poor women in distress ; what weeping and crying on every side." But, when they were apprehended, it seemed impossible to punish and imprison wives and children for no other crime than that they would not part from their husbands and fathers. They could not be sent home, for "they had no homes to go to ;" so that, at last, the magistrates were "glad to be rid of them on any terms," "though, in the meantime, they, poor souls, endured misery enough." Such was the flight of Robinson and Brewster, and their followers, from the land of their fathers.

Their arrival in Amsterdam,¹ in 1608, was but the beginning of their wanderings. "They knew they were PILGRIMS, and looked not much on those things, but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits."

They lived but as men in exile. Many of their English friends would not come to them, or departed from them weeping. "Their continual labours, with other crosses and sorrows, left them in danger to scatter or sink." "Their children, sharing their parents' burdens, bowed under the weight, and were becoming decrepid in early youth." Conscious of ability to act a higher part in the great drama of humanity, they were moved by "a hope and inward zeal of advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the

¹ *In Holland.*

remote parts of the New World ; yea, though they should be but as stepping-stones unto others for performing so great a work."

After some years, trusting in God and in themselves, they made ready for their departure. The ships which they had provided—the *Speedwell*, of sixty tons, the *Mayflower*, of one hundred and eighty tons—could hold but a minority of the congregation ; and Robinson was therefore detained at Leyden, while Brewster, the governing elder, who was also an able teacher, conducted "such of the youngest and strongest as freely offered themselves." Every enterprise of the pilgrims began from God. A solemn fast was held. "Let us seek of God," said they, "a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance." Anticipating their high destiny, and the sublime lessons of liberty that would grow out of their religious tenets, Robinson gave them a farewell, breathing a freedom of opinion and an independence of authority such as then were hardly known in the world.

"I charge you, before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech you, remember it,—'tis an article of your church covenant,—that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God."

"When the ship was ready to carry us away," writes Edward Winslow, "the brethren that stayed at Leyden, having again solemnly sought the Lord with us and for us,

feasted us that were to go, at our pastor's house, being large; where we refreshed ourselves, after tears, with singing of psalms, making joyful melody in our hearts, as well as with the voice, there being many of the congregation very expert in music; and indeed it was the sweetest melody that ever mine ears heard. After this they accompanied us to Delft-Haven, where we went to embark, and then feasted us again; and, after prayer performed by our pastor, when a flood of tears was poured out, they accompanied us to the ship, but were not able to speak one to another for the abundance of sorrow to part. But we only, going abroad, gave them a volley of small shot and three pieces of ordnance; and so, lifting up our hands to each other, and our hearts for each other to the Lord our God, we departed."

A prosperous wind soon wafts the vessel to Southampton; and in a fortnight the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell*, freighted with the first colony of New England, leave Southampton for America. But they had not gone far upon the Atlantic before the smaller vessel was found to need repairs, and they entered the port of Dartmouth. After the lapse of eight precious days, they again weigh anchor; the coast of England recedes; already they are unfurling their sails on the broad ocean, when the captain of the *Speedwell*, with his company, dismayed at the dangers of the enterprise, once more pretends that his ship is too weak for the service. They put back to Plymouth, "and agree to dismiss her, and those who are willing return to London, though this was very grievous and discouraging." Having thus winnowed their numbers, the little band, not of resolute men only, but wives, some far gone in pregnancy, children, infants, a floating village of one hundred and two souls, went on board the single ship, which was hired only to convey them across the Atlantic; and on the sixth day of

September, 1620, thirteen years after the first colonization of Virginia, two months before the concession of the grand charter of Plymouth, without any warrant from the sovereign of England, without any useful charter from a corporate body, the passengers in the *Mayflower* set sail for a new world, where the past could offer no favourable auguries.

Had New England been colonized immediately on the discovery of the American continent, the old English institutions would have been planted with the Roman Catholic hierarchy; had the settlement been made under Elizabeth, it would have been before activity of the popular mind in religion had conducted to a corresponding activity of mind in politics. The pilgrims were Englishmen, Protestants, exiles from conscience, men disciplined by misfortune, cultivated by opportunities of extensive observation, equal in rank as in rights, and bound by no code but that of religion or the public will.

The eastern coast of the United States abounds in beautiful and convenient harbours, in majestic bays and rivers. The first Virginia colony, sailing along the shores of North Carolina, was, by a favouring storm, driven into the magnificent Bay of the Chesapeake; the pilgrims, having selected for their settlement the country near the Hudson, the best position on the whole coast, were conducted to the most barren parts of Massachusetts. After a boisterous voyage of sixty-three days, during which one person had died, they espied land; and in two days more cast anchor in the harbour of Cape Cod.

XIX.

DEATH OF RALEIGH.

GARDINER.

[The settlers were hardly landed on the shores of America when the warrior and statesman who had first planned the English colonization of the New World passed away. Raleigh had been honoured and trusted by Elizabeth, but he was feared by James, accused of treason, and imprisoned for long years in the Tower. At last he was suffered to sail to discover new lands on the Orinoco ; but he found the Spaniards there, was forced to fight, and defeated. On his return the Spanish King made complaint of his attack, and James suffered him to be put to death on the old charge of treason.]

It was in vain that Raleigh begged for a few days to complete some writings which he had on hand ; he was told that he must prepare for execution on the following morning. As he was to suffer in Palace Yard, he was taken to the Gatehouse at Westminster to pass the night. With the certainty of death he had regained the composure to which he had long been a stranger. In the evening, Lady Raleigh came to take her farewell of her husband. Thinking that he might like to know that the last rites would be paid to his remains, she told him that she had obtained permission to dispose of his body. He smiled, and answered, "It is well, Bess, that thou mayest dispose of that dead which thou hadst not always the disposing of when it was alive." At midnight she left him, and he lay down to sleep for three or four hours. When he awoke he had a long conference with Dr. Townson, the Dean of Westminster, who was

surprised at the fearlessness which he exhibited at the prospect of death, and begged him to consider whether it did not proceed from carelessness or vain glory. Raleigh, now as ever unconscious of his real faults, did his best to disabuse him of this idea, and told him that he was sure that no man who knew and feared God could die with fearlessness and courage, except he was certain of God's love and favour to him. Reassured by these words, Townson proceeded to administer the Communion to him; after he had received it, he appeared cheerful, and even merry. He spoke of his expectation that he would be able to persuade the world of his innocence. The good Dean was troubled with talk of this kind, and begged him not to speak against the justice of the realm. Raleigh acknowledged that he had been condemned according to the law, but said that, for all that, he must perish in asserting his innocence.

As the hour for his execution approached, Raleigh took his breakfast, and smoked his tobacco as usual. His spirits were excited by the prospect of the scene which was before him. Being asked how he liked the wine which was brought to him, he said that "it was good drink, if a man might tarry by it." At eight the officers came to fetch him away. As he passed out to the scaffold he noticed that one of his friends, who had come to be near him at the last, was unable to push through the throng. "I know not," he said, "what shift you will make, but I am sure to have a place." A minute after, catching sight of an old man with a bald head he asked him whether he wanted anything. "Nothing," he replied, "but to see you, and to pray God to have mercy on your soul." "I thank thee, good friend," answered Raleigh, "I am sorry I have no better thing to return thee for thy good will; but take this nightcap, for thou hast more need of it now than I."

As soon as he had mounted the scaffold, he asked leave to address the people. His speech had been carefully prepared. Every word he spoke, was, as far as we can judge, literally true ; but it was not the whole truth, and it was calculated in many points to produce a false impression on his hearers. He spoke of the efforts which it had cost him to induce his men to return to England, and denied having wished to desert his comrades whilst he was lying at the mouth of the Orinoco. He then adverted to a foolish tale which had long been current against him, to the effect that at the execution of the Earl of Essex,¹ he had taken his place at a window in order to see him die, and had puffed tobacco at him in derision. The story, he said, was a pure fiction. "And now," he concluded by saying, "I entreat that you all will join with me in prayer to that Great God of Heaven whom I have so grievously offended, being a man full of all vanity, who has lived a sinful life in such callings as have been most inducing to it ; for I have been a soldier, a sailor, and a courtier, which are courses of wickedness and vice ; that His Almighty goodness will forgive me ; that He will cast away my sins from me, and that He will receive me into everlasting life ; so I take my leave of you all, making my peace with God."

As soon as the preparations were completed, Raleigh turned to the executioner, and asked to see the axe. "I prithee," said he as the man held back, "let me see it ; dost thou think that I am afraid of it?" He ran his finger down the edge, saying to himself, "This is sharp medicine, but it is a sound cure for all diseases." He then knelt down and laid his head upon the block. Some one objected that he ought to lay his face towards the east :

¹ *Lord Essex was Raleigh's great rival in Elizabeth's favour. He at last rose in revolt against her, and was put to death.*

“What matter,” he said, “how the head lie, so the heart be right?” After he had prayed for a little while, he gave the appointed signal; seeing that the headsman was reluctant to do his duty, he called upon him to strike. In two blows the head was severed from the body. His remains were delivered to his wife, and were by her buried in St. Margaret’s at Westminster.

A copy of verses written by Raleigh the night before his execution was discovered, and was soon passed from hand to hand. It was a strange medley, in which faith and confidence in God appear side by side with sarcasms upon the lawyers and the courtiers. It was perhaps at a later hour that he wrote on the fly leaf of his Bible those touching lines in which the higher part of his nature alone is visible:—

“ Even such is time that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, and all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust ;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days !
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust.”

“No matter how the head lie, so the heart be right.” Perhaps, after all, no better epitaph could be found to inscribe upon Raleigh’s tomb. For him, the child of the sixteenth century, it was still possible to hold truth and falsehood lightly, without sinking into meanness. In his chase after wealth, he was never sordid or covetous. His sins had brought with them their own punishment, a punishment which did not tarry, because he was so utterly unconscious of them. Yet it was no mere blindness to his errors which made all England feel that Raleigh’s death was

a national dishonour. His countrymen knew that in his wildest enterprises he had always before him the thought of England's greatness, and that, in his eyes, England's greatness was indissolubly connected with the truest welfare of all other nations. They knew that his heart was right.

XX.

THE PURITANS.

KINGSLEY.

[Throughout the reign of Elizabeth the bulk of Englishmen were becoming more zealously Protestant and religious. Such men came to be called "Precisians" or "Puritans." Under James, who hated it, Puritanism spread fast; and his son, Charles the First, found in it the great obstacle to his attempts to govern England in defiance of the Parliament. The Puritans were stern and sober-minded men; but they were of noble temper, and did much to raise the standard of English life. Mr. Kingsley has given a fine picture of a young Puritan in his sketch of Zeal-for-Truth Thoresby.]

Was there no poetry in these Puritans, because they wrote no poetry? We do not mean now the unwritten tragedy of the battle-psalm and the charge; but simply idyllic poetry and quiet home-drama, love-poetry of the heart and the hearth, and the beauties of every-day human life? Take the most commonplace of them: was Zeal-for-Truth Thoresby, of Thoresby Rise in Deeping Fen, because his father had thought fit to give him an ugly and silly name, the less of a noble lad? Did his name prevent his being six feet high? Were his shoulders the less broad for it, his cheeks the less ruddy for it? He wore his flaxen hair of the same length that every one now wears theirs, instead of letting it

hang half-way to his waist in essenced curls ; but was he therefore the less of a true Viking's son, bold-hearted as his sea-roving ancestors who won the Danelagh by Canute's side, and settled there on Thoresby Rise, to grow wheat and breed horses, generation succeeding generation, in the old moated grange ? He carried a Bible in his jack-boot : but did that prevent him, as Oliver¹ rode past him with an approving smile on Naseby-field, thinking himself a very handsome fellow, with his mustache and imperial, and bright red coat, and cuirass well polished in spite of many a dint, as he sate his father's great black horse as gracefully and firmly as any long-locked and essenced cavalier in front of him ? Or did it prevent him thinking too, for a moment, with a throb of the heart, that sweet Cousin Patience far away at home, could she but see him, might have the same opinion of him as he had of himself ? Was he the worse for the thought ? He was certainly not the worse for checking it the next instant, with manly shame for letting such "carnal vanities" rise in his heart, while he was "doing the Lord's work" in the teeth of death and hell : but was there no poetry in him then ? No poetry in him five minutes after, as the long rapier swung round his head, redder and redder at every sweep ? We are befooled by names. Call him Crusader instead of Roundhead, and he seems at once (granting him only sincerity, which he had, and that of a right awful kind) as complete a knight-errant as ever watched and prayed, ere putting on his spurs, in fantastic Gothic chapel, beneath "storied windows richly dight." Was there no poetry in him, either, half an hour afterwards, as he lay bleeding across the corpse of the gallant horse, waiting for his turn with the surgeon, and fumbled for the Bible in his boot, and tried to hum a psalm, and thought of Cousin Patience, and his father, and his mother, and how they would hear, at

¹ *Oliver Cromwell.*

least, that he had played the man in Israel that day, and resisted unto blood, striving against sin and the Man of Sin ?

And was there no poetry in him, too, as he came wearied along Thoresby dyke, in the quiet autumn eve, home to the house of his forefathers, and saw afar off the knot of tall poplars rising over the broad misty flat, and the one great abele tossing its sheets of silver in the dying gusts, and knew that they stood before his father's door ? Who can tell all the pretty child-memories which flitted across his brain at that sight, and made him forget that he was a wounded cripple ? There is the dyke where he and his brothers snared the great pike which stole the ducklings—how many years ago ? while pretty little Patience stood by trembling, and shrieked at each snap of the brute's wide jaws ; and there, down that long dark lode, ruffling with crimson in the sunset breeze, he and his brothers skated home in triumph with Patience when his uncle died. What a day that was ! when, in the clear, bright winter noon, they laid the gate upon the ice, and tied the beef-bones under the four corners, and packed little Patience on it.—How pretty she looked, though her eyes were red with weeping, as she peeped out from among the heap of blankets and horse-hides, and how merrily their long fen-runners whistled along the ice-lane, between the high banks of sighing reed, as they towed home their new treasure in triumph, at a pace like the race-horse's, to their dear old home among the poplar trees. And now he was going home to meet her, after a mighty victory, a deliverance from heaven, second only in his eyes to that Red-sea one. Was there no poetry in his heart at that thought ? Did not the glowing sunset, and the reed-beds which it transfigured before him into sheets of golden flame, seem tokens that the glory of God was going before him in his path ? Did

not the sweet clamour of the wild-fowl, gathering for one rich pæan ere they sank into rest, seem to him as God's bells chiming him home in triumph, with peals sweeter and bolder than those of Lincoln or Peterborough steeple-house? Did not the very lapwing, as she tumbled softly wailing, before his path, as she did years ago, seem to welcome the wanderer home in the name of heaven?

Fair Patience, too, though she was a Puritan, yet did not her cheek flush, her eye grow dim, like any other girl's, as she saw far off the red-coat, like a sliding spark of fire, coming slowly along the straight fen-bank, and fled up stairs into her chamber to pray, half that it might be, half that it might not be he? Was there no happy storm of human tears and human laughter when he entered the courtyard gate? Did not the old dog lick his Puritan hand as lovingly as if it had been a Cavalier's? Did not lads and lasses run out shouting? Did not the old yeoman father hug him, weep over him, hold him at arm's length, and hug him again, as heartily as any other John Bull, even though the next moment he called all to kneel down and thank Him who had sent his boy home again, after bestowing on him the grace to bind kings in chains and nobles with links of iron, and contend to death for the faith delivered to the saints? And did not Zeal-for-Truth look about as wistfully for Patience as any other man would have done, longing to see her, yet not daring even to ask for her? And when she came down at last, was she the less lovely in his eyes because she came, not flaunting with bare bosom, in tawdry finery and paint, but shrouded close in coif and pinner, hiding from all the world beauty which was there still, but was meant for one alone, and that only if God willed, in God's good time? And was there no faltering of their voices, no light in their eyes, no trembling pressure of their hands, which said more, and was more, aye, and more

beautiful in the sight of Him who made them, than all Herrick's Dianemes, Waller's Saccharissas, flames, darts, posies, love-knots, anagrams, and the rest of the insincere cant of the court? What if Zeal-for-Truth had never strung together two rhymes in his life? Did not his heart go for inspiration to a loftier Helicon, when it whispered to itself, "My love, my dove, my undefiled, is but one," than if he had filled pages with sonnets about Venuses and Cupids, love-sick shepherds and cruel nymphs?

And was there no poetry, true idyllic poetry, as of Longfellow's "Evangeline" itself, in that trip round the old farm next morning; when Zeal-for-Truth, after looking over every heifer, and peeping into every sty, would needs canter down by his father's side to the horse-fen, with his arm in a sling; while the partridges whirred up before them, and the lurchers flashed like grey snakes after the hare, and the colts came whinnying round, with staring eyes and streaming manes, and the two chatted on in the same sober businesslike English tone, alternately of "The Lord's great dealings" by General Cromwell, the pride of all honest fen-men, and the price of troop-horses at the next Horncastle fair?

Poetry in those old Puritans? Why not? They were men of like passions with ourselves. They loved, they married, they brought up children; they feared, they sinned, they sorrowed, they fought—they conquered. There was poetry enough in them, be sure, though they acted it like men, instead of singing it like birds.

XXI.

MILTON.

GREEN.

A picture more real and hardly less picturesque of Puritan life is to be seen in the early life of the Puritan poet, [John Milton.]

MILTON is not only the highest, but the completest type of Puritanism. His life is absolutely contemporary with that of his cause. He was born when it began to exercise a direct power over English politics and English religion; he died when its effort to mould them into its own shape was over, and when it had again sunk into one of many influences to which we owe our English character. His earlier verse, the pamphlets of his riper years, the epics of his age, mark with a singular precision the three great stages in its history. His youth shows us how much of the gaiety, the poetic ease, the intellectual culture of the Renaissance¹ lingered in a Puritan home. Scrivener² and "precisian"³ as his father was, he was a skilful musician; and the boy inherited his father's skill on lute and organ. One of the finest outbursts in the scheme of education which he put forth at a later time is a passage, in which he vindicates the province of music as an agent in moral training. His home, his tutor, his school were all rigidly Puritan; but there was nothing narrow or illiberal in his early training. "My father," he says, "destined me while yet a little boy to the study of

¹ *The age of Elizabeth.*

² *A scrivener was much like a*

modern attorney.

³ *The Puritans were called "precisians" from their preciseness of speech and avoidance of oaths and untruths.*

humane letters ; which I seized with such eagerness that from the twelfth year of my age I scarcely ever went from my lessons to bed before midnight." But to the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew he learnt at school, the scrivener advised him to add Italian and French. Nor were English letters neglected. Spenser gave the earliest turn to his poetic genius. In spite of the war between playwright and precisian, a Puritan youth could still in Milton's days avow his love of the stage, "if Jonson's⁴ learned sock be on, or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child, warble his native wood-notes wild," and gather from the "masques and antique pageantry" of the court revel hints for his own "Comus" and "Arcades." Nor does any shadow of the coming struggle with the Church disturb the young scholar's reverie, as he wanders beneath "the high embowed roof, with antique pillars, massy proof, and storied windows richly dight, casting a dim religious light," or as he hears "the pealing organ blow to the full-voiced choir below, in service high and anthem clear."

His enjoyment of the gaiety of life stands in bright contrast with the gloom and sternness of the later Puritanism. In spite of "a certain reservedness of natural disposition," which shrank from "festivities and jests, in which I acknowledge my faculty to be very slight," the young singer could still enjoy the "jest and youthful jollity," of the world around him, of its "quips and cranks and wanton wiles ;" he could join the crew of Mirth, and look pleasantly on at the village fair, "where the jolly rebecks sound to many a youth and many a maid, dancing in the chequered shade." But his pleasures were unreprieved. There was nothing ascetic in his look, in his slender, vigorous frame, his face full of a delicate yet serious beauty, the rich brown hair which

⁴ *Ben Jonson, the greatest of English dramatists who followed Shakspeare.*

clustered over his brow ; and the words we have quoted show his sensitive enjoyment of all that was beautiful. But from coarse or sensual self-indulgence the young Puritan turned with disgust : " A certain reservedness of nature, an honest haughtiness and self-esteem, kept me still above those low descents of mind." He drank in an ideal chivalry from Spenser, but his religion and purity disdained the outer pledge on which chivalry built up its fabric of honour. " Every free and gentle spirit," said Milton, " without that oath, ought to be born a knight." It was with this temper that he passed from his London school, St. Paul's, to Christ's College at Cambridge, and it was this temper that he preserved throughout his University career. He left Cambridge, as he said afterwards, " free from all reproach, and approved by all honest men," with a purpose of self-dedication " to that same lot, however mean or high, towards which time leads me, and the will of Heaven."

Milton was engaged during the civil war⁵ in strife with Presbyterians and with Royalists, pleading for civil and religious freedom, for freedom of social life, and freedom of the press. At a later time he became Latin Secretary to the Protector,⁶ in spite of a blindness which had been brought on by the intensity of his study. The Restoration found him of all living men the most hateful to the Royalists ; for it was his " Defence of the English People" which had justified throughout Europe the execution of the King.⁷ Parliament ordered his book to be burnt by the common hangman ; he was for a time imprisoned, and even when released he had to live amidst threats of assassination from fanatical Cavaliers. To the ruin of his cause were added personal misfortunes in the bankruptcy of the scrivener who held the bulk of his property, and in the Fire of London, which

⁵ *Between Charles the First and the Parliament.*

⁶ *Cromwell.* ⁷ *Charles the First.*

deprived him of much of what was left. As age grew on, he found himself reduced to comparative poverty, and driven to sell his library for subsistence. Even among the sectaries who shared his political opinions Milton stood in religious opinion alone, for he had gradually severed himself from every accepted form of faith, and embraced Arianism, and had ceased to attend at any place of worship. Nor was his home a happy one. The grace and geniality of his youth disappeared in the drudgery of a schoolmaster's life and amongst the invectives of controversy. In age his temper became stern and exacting. His daughters, who were forced to read to their blind father in languages which they could not understand, revolted utterly against their bondage.

But solitude and misfortune only brought out into bolder relief Milton's inner greatness. There was a grand simplicity in the life of his later years. He listened every morning to a chapter of the Hebrew Bible, and after musing in silence for a while pursued his studies till mid-day. Then he took exercise for an hour, played for another hour on the organ or viol, and renewed his studies. The evening was spent in converse with visitors and friends. For lonely and unpopular as Milton was, there was one thing about him which made his house in Bunhill Fields a place of pilgrimage to the wits of the Restoration. He was the last of the Elizabethans. He had possibly seen Shakspeare, as on his visits to London after his retirement to Stratford the playwright passed along Bread Street to his wit combats at the Mermaid. He had been the contemporary of Webster and Massinger, of Herrick and Crashaw. His "Comus" and "Arcades" had rivalled the masques of Ben Jonson. It was with a reverence drawn from thoughts like these that Dryden looked on the blind poet as he sate, clad in black, in his chamber hung with rusty green tapestry, his fair brow

hair falling as of old over a calm, serene face that still retained much of its youthful beauty, his cheeks delicately coloured, his clear grey eyes showing no trace of their blindness. But famous, whether for good or ill, as his prose writings had made him, during fifteen years only a few sonnets had broken his silence as a singer. It was now, in his blindness and old age, with the cause he loved trodden under foot by men as vile as the rabble in "Comus," that the genius of Milton took refuge in the great poem on which through years of silence his imagination had still been brooding.

On his return from his travels in Italy, Milton spoke of himself as musing on "a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases." His lips were touched at last. Seven years after the Restoration appeared the "Paradise Lost," and four years later the "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes," in the severe grandeur of whose verse we see the poet himself "fallen," like Samson, "on evil days and evil tongues, with darkness and with danger compassed round." But great as the two last works were, their greatness was eclipsed by that of their predecessor. The whole genius of Milton expressed itself in the "Paradise Lost." The romance, the gorgeous fancy, the daring imagination which he shared with the Elizabethan poets, the large but ordered beauty of form which he had drunk in from the literature of Greece and Rome, the sublimity of conception, the loftiness of phrase which he owed to the Bible, blended

in this story "of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world and all our woe." It is only when we review the strangely mingled elements which make up the poem that we realize the genius which fused them into such a perfect whole. The meagre outline of the Hebrew legend is lost in the splendour and music of Milton's verse. The stern idealism of Geneva is clothed in the gorgeous robes of the Renaissance. If we miss something of the free play of Spenser's fancy, and yet more of the imaginative delight in their own creations which gives so exquisite a life to the poetry of the early dramatists, we find in place of these the noblest example which our literature affords of the ordered majesty of classic form.

XXII.

STRAFFORD'S TRIAL AND DEATH.

FORSTER.

[James struggled fiercely against Puritanism and the love of freedom it aroused, and the struggle went on under his son Charles the First. Parliament after parliament was dissolved; and Charles at last resolved to govern by his own will. In this he was chiefly supported by Sir Thomas Wentworth, afterwards made Earl of Strafford, a man of great genius, but of an arbitrary and despotic temper, who went to Ireland as its governor, and strove to build up an Irish army which might be used to keep England and English freedom at the King's feet. But after some years troubles broke suddenly out in Scotland: the Scots rose in revolt; the English troops whom the King raised refused to fight; the Irish army proved useless; and the whole system of arbitrary rule came to an end. Charles was forced to summon the Long Parliament, and one of

its first acts was to impeach Lord Strafford. His trial before the Lords was in effect a trial of the King's government.]

THREE kingdoms,¹ by their representatives, were present, and for fifteen days, the period of the duration of the trial, "it was daily," says Baillie, "the most glorious assembly the isle could afford." The Earl² himself appeared before it each day in deep mourning, wearing his George.³ The stern and simple character of his features accorded with the occasion,—his "countenance manly black," as Whitelock terms it, and his thick dark hair cut short from his ample forehead. A poet who was present exclaimed,

"On thy brow
Sate terror mixed with wisdom, and at once
Saturn and Hermes in thy countenance."

—To this was added the deep interest which can never be withheld from sickness bravely borne. His face was dashed with paleness, and his body stooped with its own infirmities even more than with its master's cares. This was, indeed, so evident, that he was obliged to allude to it himself, and it was not seldom alluded to by others. "They had here," he said, on one occasion, "this rag of mortality before them, worn out with numerous infirmities, which, if they tore into shreds, there was no great loss, only in the spilling of his, they would open a way to the blood of all the nobility in the land." His disorders were the most terrible to bear in themselves, and of that nature, moreover, which can least endure the aggravation of mental anxiety. A severe attack of stone, gout in one of his legs to an extent even with him unusual, and other pains, had bent all their

¹ *Scotland and Ireland sent representatives to join those of the English House of Commons as accusers.*

² *Strafford.*

³ *The insignia of the Garter.*

afflictions upon him. Yet, though a generous sympathy was demanded on this score, and paid by not a few of his worst opponents, it availed little with the multitudes that were present. Much noise and confusion prevailed at all times through the hall; there was always a great clamour near the doors; and we have it on the authority of Rushworth himself,⁴ that at those intervals when Strafford was busied in preparing his answers, the most distracting "hubbubs" broke out, lords walked about and chatted, and commoners were yet more offensively loud. This was unfavourable to the recollection, for disproof, of incidents long passed, and of conversations forgotten! But conscious that he was not to be allowed in any case permission to retire, as soon as one of his opponent managers had closed his charge, the Earl calmly turned his back to his judges, and with uncomplaining composure, conferred with his secretaries and counsel.

As the trial proceeded, so extraordinary were the resources he manifested, that the managers of the commons failed in much of the effect of their evidence. Even the clergy who were present forgot the imprisonment of the weak and miserable Laud⁵ (who now lay in prison, stripped of his power by this formidable parliament, which the very despotism of himself and Strafford had gifted with its potently operative force!) and thought of nothing but the "grand apostate"⁶ before them. "By this time," says May, "the people began to be a little divided in opinion. The clergy in general were so much fallen into love and admiration of this Earl, that the Archbishop of Canterbury was almost quite forgotten by them. The courtiers cried him

⁴ *The Clerk of the House of Commons.* ⁵ *Archbishop of Canterbury, and fellow-minister of the King with Strafford.*

⁶ *Strafford had begun his parliamentary life as a supporter of English rights, and had afterwards gone over to the side of the Crown.*

up, and the ladies were exceedingly on his side. It seemed a very pleasant object to see so many Sempronias, with pen, ink, and paper in their hands, noting the passages, and discoursing upon the grounds, of law and state. They were all of his side, whether moved by pity, proper to their sex, or by ambition of being able to judge of the parts of the prisoner. Even the chairman of the committee who prepared his impeachment observes, "Certainly never any man acted such a part, on such a theatre, with more wisdom, constancy, and eloquence, with greater reason, judgment, and temper, and with a better grace in all his words and gestures, than this great and excellent person did."

[The trial ended in the Earl's condemnation; and in spite of his trust in the King, Charles left him to die.]

Strafford moved on to the scaffold with undisturbed composure. His body, so soon to be released, had given him a respite of its infirmities for that trying hour. Rushworth, the Clerk of the Parliament, was one of the spectators, and has minutely described the scene. "When he arrived outside the Tower, the Lieutenant desired him to take coach at the gate, lest the enraged mob should tear him in pieces. 'No,' said he, 'Mr. Lieutenant, I dare look death in the face, and the people too; have you a care I do not escape; 'tis equal to me how I die, whether by the stroke of the executioner, or by the madness and fury of the people, if that may give them better content.'" Not less than 100,000 persons, who had crowded in from all parts, were visible on Tower-hill, in a long and dark perspective. Strafford, in his walk, took off his hat frequently, and saluted them, and received not a word of insult or reproach. His step and manner are described by Rushworth to have been those of "a general marching at the head of an army, to breathe victory, rather than those of a condemned man, to

undergo the sentence of death." At his side, upon the scaffold, stood his brother, Sir George Wentworth, the Bishop of Armagh, the Earl of Cleveland, and others of his friends,—and behind them the indefatigable collector Rushworth, who "being then on the scaffold with him," as he says, took down the speech which, having asked their patience first, Strafford at some length addressed to the people. He declared the innocence of his intentions, whatever might have been the construction of his acts, and said that the prosperity of his country was his fondest wish. But it augured ill, he told them, for the people's happiness, to write the commencement of a reformation in letters of blood. "One thing I desire to be heard in," he added, "and do hope that for Christian charity's sake I shall be believed. I was so far from being against parliaments, that I did always think parliaments in England to be the happy constitution of the kingdom and nation, and the best means, under God, to make the King and his people happy."

He then turned to take leave of the friends who had accompanied him to the scaffold. He beheld his brother weeping excessively. "Brother," he said, "what do you see in me to cause these tears? Does any innocent fear betray in me—guilt? or my innocent boldness—atheism? Think that you are now accompanying me the fourth time to my marriage-bed. That block must be my pillow, and here I shall rest from all my labours. No thoughts of envy, no dreams of treason, nor jealousies, nor cares, for the king, the state, or myself, shall interrupt this easy sleep. Remember me to my sister, and to my wife; and carry my blessing to my eldest son, and to Ann, and Arabella, not forgetting my little infant, that knows neither good nor evil, and cannot speak for itself. God speak for it, and bless it!" While undressing himself, and winding his hair under a cap, he said, looking on the block—"I do as cheerfully

put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed."

"Then," proceeds Rushworth, closing this memorable scene, "then he called, 'Where is the man that shall do this last office (meaning the executioner)? call him to me.' When he came and asked him forgiveness, he told him he forgave him and all the world. Then kneeling down by the block, he went to prayer again by himself, the Bishop of Armagh kneeling on the one side, and the minister on the other; to the which minister after prayer he turned himself, and spoke some few words softly; having his hands lifted up, the minister closed his hands with his. Then bowing himself to the earth, to lay down his head on the block, he told the executioner that he would first lay down his head to try the fitness of the block, and take it up again, before he laid it down for good and all; and so he did; and before he laid it down again he told the executioner that he would give him warning when to strike, by stretching forth his hands; and then he laid down his neck on the block, stretching out his hands; the executioner struck off his head at one blow, then took the head up in his hand, and showed it to all the people, and said, 'God save the King!'"

XXIII.

DEATH OF HAMPDEN.

MACAULAY.

[For a time the King seemed to consent to the reforms of the Long Parliament; but he at last broke from it, collected an army, and made war against it. The Parliament gathered another army, and after a drawn battle at Edgehill, the two forces encamped in the valley of the

Thames, Charles occupying Oxford, the Parliamentary army covering London by taking post in the vale of Aylesbury. The most active and able of its officers was John Hampden, a Buckinghamshire squire, who had refused to pay an illegal tax called ship-money, and had become one of the leading members of the Long Parliament. Hampden was as wise and temperate as he was earnest in his patriotism; and his fall was the severest loss English freedom ever sustained.]

IN the early part of 1643 the shires lying in the neighbourhood of London, which were devoted to the cause of the Parliament, were incessantly annoyed by Rupert¹ and his cavalry. Essex² had extended his lines so far that almost every point was vulnerable. The young prince, who, though not a great general, was an active and enterprising partisan, frequently surprised posts, burned villages, swept away cattle, and was again at Oxford before a force sufficient to encounter him could be assembled.

The languid proceedings of Essex were loudly condemned by the troops. All the ardent and daring spirits in the parliamentary party were eager to have Hampden at their head. Had his life been prolonged, there is every reason to believe that the supreme command would have been entrusted to him. But it was decreed that, at this conjuncture, England should lose the only man who united perfect disinterestedness to eminent talents, the only man who, being capable of gaining the victory for her, was incapable of abusing that victory when gained.

In the evening of the 17th of June Rupert darted out of Oxford with his cavalry on a predatory expedition. At three in the morning of the following day he attacked and dispersed a few parliamentary soldiers who lay at Postcombe. He then

¹ *Prince Rupert was a German nephew of Charles, who commanded his horse.* ² *The Earl of Essex was general of the Parliamentary army.*

flew to Chinnor, burned the village, killed or took all the troops who were quartered there, and prepared to hurry back with his booty and his prisoners to Oxford.

Hampden had, on the preceding day, strongly represented to Essex the danger to which this part of the line was exposed. As soon as he received intelligence of Rupert's incursion, he sent off a horseman with a message to the General. The cavaliers, he said, could return only by Chiselhampton Bridge. A force ought to be instantly despatched in that direction for the purpose of intercepting them. In the meantime he resolved to set out with all the cavalry that he could muster, for the purpose of impeding the march of the enemy till Essex could take measures for cutting off their retreat. A considerable body of horse and dragoons volunteered to follow him. He was not their commander. He did not even belong to their branch of the service. But "he was," says Lord Clarendon, "second to none but the General himself in the observance and application of all men." On the field of Chalgrove he came up with Rupert. A fierce skirmish ensued. In the first charge Hampden was struck in the shoulder by two bullets, which broke the bone, and lodged in his body. The troops of the Parliament lost heart and gave way. Rupert, after pursuing them for a short time, hastened to cross the bridge, and made his retreat unmolested to Oxford.

Hampden, with his head drooping, and his hands leaning on his horse's neck, moved feebly out of the battle. The mansion which had been inhabited by his father-in-law, and from which in his youth he had carried home his bride Elizabeth, was in sight. There still remains an affecting tradition that he looked for a moment towards that beloved house, and made an effort to go thither and die. But the enemy lay in that direction. He turned his horse towards

Thame, where he arrived almost fainting with agony. The surgeon dressed his wounds. But there was no hope. The pain which he suffered was most excruciating. But he endured it with admirable firmness and resignation. His first care was for his country. He wrote from his bed several letters to London concerning public affairs, and sent a last pressing message to the head-quarters, recommending that the dispersed forces should be concentrated. When his public duties were performed, he calmly prepared himself to die. He was attended by a clergyman of the Church of England, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy, and by the chaplain of the Buckinghamshire Greencoats, Dr. Spurton, whom Baxter describes as an able and excellent divine.

A short time before Hampden's death the sacrament was administered to him. He declared that though he disliked the government of the Church of England, he yet agreed with that Church as to all essential matters of doctrine. His intellect remained unclouded. When all was nearly over, he lay murmuring faint prayers for himself, and for the cause in which he died. "Lord Jesus," he exclaimed in the moment of the last agony, "receive my soul. O Lord, save my country. O Lord, be merciful to——." In that broken ejaculation passed away his noble and fearless spirit.

He was buried in the parish church of Hampden.³ His soldiers, bareheaded, with reversed arms and muffled drums and colours, escorted his body to the grave, singing, as they marched, that lofty and melancholy psalm in which the fragility of human life is contrasted with the immutability of Him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night.

³ *The village of Hampden on the Cotswolds, by Hampden House.*

XXIV.

MARSTON MOOR.

MARKHAM.

[For a time the royal armies won successes over those of their opponents, and the King gained ground. But the Scots at last came to the aid of the Parliament, and their armies closed on York; the Scotch under Lord Leven, a Yorkshire army under Fairfax, and one from the Eastern Counties with Lord Manchester and Cromwell at its head. Lord Newcastle, who commanded for the King in the north, appealed for aid to Charles; and Prince Rupert was sent to unite with him and to relieve the town. The forces met on Marston Moor, an open ground a few miles from York.]

HERE were the two great armies drawn up in battle array; a deep ditch, and a strip of land covered with waving corn, a few hundred paces across, alone dividing them. We may picture to ourselves the long lines of horsemen, with their breast-plates glittering in the afternoon sun; the solid masses of shouldered pikes, such as Velasquez has made us familiar with in his glorious picture of *Las Lanzas*; and the hundreds of fluttering pennons above them, of all shapes and colours. The standard of Prince Rupert, with its red cross, was nearly five yards long.

At about five in the afternoon, there was a silence—no movement on either side. A fearful ominous pause. The tension of such silence, at such a moment, was more than the men could endure, and soon “in Marston corn-fields they fell to singing psalms.” Leven¹ paused, in the hope

¹ *The Scotch General, Lord Leven, took supreme command in the whole Parliamentary force.*

that the Royalists would advance to attack him, for there would be an evident disadvantage to the army that crossed the ditch, as such a movement must necessarily somewhat break and confuse its line. But there was no sign of any such intention on the part of the enemy; and old Leven, seeing that they would not charge him, resolved, by the help of God, to charge them. It was seven o'clock before the order for a general advance was sounded, but a "summer's evening is as long as a winter's day," and there was time to join battle before night, when a bright harvest moon would give light enough for the victors to complete their work.

The whole allied line came down through the corn in the bravest order, the solid squares of foot and masses of cavalry looking like so many thick clouds. They joined battle with their foes along the line of the ditch, and then truly the silence was exchanged for a deafening noise of fire, clashing of steel, and loud defiant shouts. The Royalists were forced back at all points. Manchester's foot, led on by General Crawford, drove the enemy out of the part of the ditch in their front with some slaughter, capturing four drakes. This enabled the main battle of the Scots foot to pass the barrier with little opposition, the dragoons having already gained the line of Syke beck, or the "cross ditch," as they called it. Sir William Fairfax also, on the right centre, with his Yorkshire foot, beat off the enemy from the hedge in his front, captured a demi-culverin and two drakes,² and began to lead his men up Moor-lane.

Thus the allies had carried the ditch, and gained a position on the moor along their whole line. The musketeers in the ditch fell back, and the battle commenced again on a new line, nearly as far north as White Syke close.

² *Various sorts of artillery.*

Meanwhile the wings had delivered their charges. David Leslie and Cromwell fell upon the Newark horse under Lord Byron close along the ditch, and, after some sharp fighting, routed and dispersed them. But, as they opened to right and left, the main body of the Royalist wing, consisting of Rupert's life guards and Grandison's regiment, appeared in the gap, ready to charge, some few hundred yards away on the moor.

From some cause or other, Cromwell and his men did pause at a critical moment, when David Leslie dashed on to the charge, and met Rupert's horse in full career, giving the troopers of Manchester's brigade time to recover themselves and support him. A desperate conflict ensued. For some time the two bodies of horses stood at swords' point, hacking one another. Ludlow heard a story that, having discharged their pistols, they flung them at each other's heads, and fell to with their swords. Young Lord Grandison received as many as ten wounds. At last the Royalists wavered, broke, and fled in irretrievable rout, riding over and dispersing their own reserves of foot. Yet they had bravely disputed every inch of ground for nearly an hour. They fled along Wilstrop wood side as fast and thick as could be, hotly pursued by the victorious allies, who chased them down the York road for three miles, committing fearful slaughter, to which the bullets found long afterwards in the heart wood of Wilstrop trees bore silent testimony. Rupert himself would have been taken prisoner if he had not hid himself in some "bean-lands." He played the "creep-hedge," as John Vicars spitefully puts it. The brigade of Manchester's foot, under Crawford, advanced by the side of the horse, dispersing the enemy's infantry as fast as they charged, and utterly routing Rupert's foot regiments, under O'Neil, which formed the right of the Royalist line.

All this time the Scots brigade, forming the centre, was

bearing the brunt of the action, and repulsing the assaults of Porter's division, led on by Lord Eythin; while the Fairfaxes were suffering a great disaster on the right.

Sir William Fairfax, after crossing the ditch, gallantly led his men up Moor-lane through a terrific cross-fire. But, as they emerged on the moor in column, they were received with murderous volleys from Newcastle's white-coats,³ so that there was more slaughter here than on any other part of the field. They wavered, and just then large bodies of their own flying cavalry, routed by Sir William Urry, galloped over them in wild disorder. They were thrown into confusion, and, with the two regiments of Scots reserves, broke and fled towards Tadcaster.

At the same time as the foot advanced up Moor-lane, the engagement had commenced between the horse of Fairfax and Goring on the extreme right. Sir Thomas was given the most difficult ground on the whole battle-field. Besides several ditches, there was a dense undergrowth of furze in that part of the moor, which threw the cavalry into some disorder before reaching the enemy. Notwithstanding these inconveniences, he saw his right wing properly formed, and then, placing himself at the head of his own regiment, charged the enemy in most gallant style. He was opposed to Sir William Urry's alternate bodies of horse and musketeers, and was a long time hotly engaged at swords' point, suffering terribly from the galling fire of the muskets; but at last he routed this part of the Royalist wing, and his regiment chased the fugitives some way along the road to York. This was the most desperate fight in the whole battle, and many of the officers and men were killed and wounded. Sir Thomas himself received a deep sabre cut across the cheek, the mark of which he took with him to his grave.

³ So called from the white uniforms Newcastle's men wore.

The left wing of the Royalists was now completely victorious. Part of the troops galloped up the hill, and began plundering the baggage round the clump of trees. The rest, consisting of Newcastle's white-coats, and the cavalry led by Lucas and Urry, made a furious attack upon the right flank of the allied centre, which was already hotly engaged with Porter's division in front. The fate of the battle now depended upon the valour and steadiness of this brigade of four regiments of Scots foot, under General Baillie, with its reserves under Lumsdaine. "They had," says Principal Baillie, "the greatest burden of the conduct of all." If they could hold their own until the left wing could come to the rescue, the day was won; if not, utter ruin was inevitable.

Both sides saw this, and the struggle became desperate. One eye-witness declares that there was such noise with shot and clamour of shouts, that it was quite deafening, and the smoke of the powder was so thick that no light could be seen but what preceded from the mouths of guns. Twice the Royalist cavalry charged furiously, and twice were they gallantly repulsed, the Scotch regiments in alternate *tertias* of pikes and muskets maintaining their ground for nearly an hour. At a third charge they wavered, and some of the reserves broke and fled. But Lumsdaine and Lord Lindsay rallied two or three regiments, and at that moment David Leslie and Manchester's foot appeared on the scene, and the day was won. Sir Charles Lucas's horse was killed, and he himself taken prisoner when he charged the third time.

When the reserves of the centre broke, the old Earl of Leven urged them to stand their ground. "If you fly from the enemy," he exclaimed, "at least stand by your general." But it was all in vain. They were panic-stricken, and fled; and he, thinking, like Lord Fairfax, that all was lost, fled

with them. We can tell the time of his flight by the direction he took. Instead of following Lord Fairfax to Tadcaster, he turned sharp to the right, because Marston Fields were already overrun by the victorious left wing of the Royalists, and rode away to Wetherby, or, as some say, as far as Leeds. Both Scots and English, friends and enemies, seem to have taken special pleasure in retailing numerous versions of the poor old veteran's mishap or mistake, not remembering how ably he formed the line of battle, and how hard he strove to rally the fugitives.

It was at this juncture that the Marquis of Newcastle woke up, got out of his coach, and proceeded to join in the combat, followed by his brother, a page, and a few gentlemen volunteers. He had an independent encounter with a pike-man ; and after performing other prodigies of valour, was, according to the Duchess, the last to ride off the field, leaving his coach and six behind him. It was taken, with all his correspondence, some of which criminated poor Sir John Hotham.

The left wing of the allies heard of the reverses on the right from Sir Thomas Fairfax, when he joined them with his regiment as they were chasing the Royalists along Wilstrop wood side. He and David Leslie, with Crawford and Cromwell, then led the troops across the moor, to the support of their centre, now sorely pressed in front and flank. When the plundering Royalists saw their approach, they hurried down from Marston Fields. For a time the renewed conflict was sharp, but it did not last long. The Royalist cavalry of their left wing, demoralised by success, were routed by Manchester's horse ; while David Leslie and the Scots dragoons charged the Royalist foot that still held their ground.

Newcastle's regiment of white-coats resolved to die rather than submit. and retreated into White Syke close ; where, as

the Duchess describes it, "they showed such extraordinary valour that they were killed as they stood, in rank and file." Captain Camby, who came up with some of Manchester's horse in support of Leslie, and was one of the first to enter the close, describes it as "a small parcel of ground ditched in." For a whole hour, after the day was utterly lost, did these brave border men continue to fight, repulsing the charges of the cavalry, and of Colonel Frizell's dragoons, at near push of pike. They would take no quarter, and when the allied horse did enter the close, there were not thirty white-coats alive. Captain Camby protested that "he never, in all the fights he was ever in, saw such resolute brave fellows, and that he saved two or three against their wills."

Long before this the battle was won. The horse of Manchester and Leslie charged every party remaining in the field until all were fairly routed and put to flight, and by nine that night the field was cleared of all but prisoners and dead. There would have been many more slain in the heat of the pursuit had not Sir Thomas Fairfax galloped up and down, calling to the soldiers to spare their enemies. "Spare the poor deluded countrymen," he cried; "O spare them who are misled, and know not what they do." The whole Royalist army fled in utter rout to York.

XXV.

TRIAL OF THE KING.

FORSTER.

[Another great overthrow at Naseby completed the ruin of the royal armies; and Charles was at last driven to give himself up to the Scots, who surrendered him to the Parliament. Strife, however, had now broken out between the Parliament and its victorious army, and Charles used

this to bring about a fresh and desperate royalist rising, which was supported by an army from Scotland, which had now turned on his side. All, however, were defeated; and in their anger the army, which had now mastered the Parliament by driving out the greater part of its members, determined that he should be put to death. The House of Commons ordered a court to be set up for his trial under the Lord President Bradshaw, and to this Charles was summoned.]

THE King was brought privately from Windsor to St. James's, and on the following morning, the 20th of January, 1649, conducted by Colonel Harrison from St. James's to Westminster. A scene awaited him there, which called, and not in vain, for an exercise of dignity and firmness unsurpassed in the history of kings.

Westminster Hall, fitted up as a "high court of justice" received him. In the centre of the court, on a crimson velvet chair, sat Bradshaw dressed in a scarlet robe, and covered by his famous "broad-brimmed hat;" with a desk and velvet cushion before him; Say and Lisle on each side of him; and the two clerks of the court sitting below him at a table, covered with a rich Turkey carpet, on which were laid the sword of state and a mace. The rest of the court, with their hats on, and, according to Rushworth, "in their best habits," took their seats on side benches hung with scarlet. A numerous guard of gentlemen carrying partisans divided themselves on each side. Such was the simple appearance in itself of this memorable court. When its members had all taken their seats, the great gates of the hall were thrown open, and the vast area below was at once filled with crowds of the English people, eager to witness the astonishing spectacle of a monarch brought to account for crimes committed in the period of his delegated authority. This presence of the people was the grandest feature of

the scene. Surrounding galleries were also filled with spectators.

Charles entered and advanced up the side of the hall next the Thames, from the house of Sir Robert Cotton. He was attended by Colonels Tomlinson and Hacker, by thirty-two officers holding partisans, and by his own servants. The serjeant-at-arms, with his mace, received him and conducted him to the bar, where a crimson velvet chair was placed for him, facing the court. After a stern and steadfast gaze on the court, and on the people in the galleries on each side of him, Charles placed himself in the chair—and the moment after, as if recollecting something, rose up, and turned about, looking down the vast hall, first on the guards which were ranged on its left or western side, and then on the eager waving multitude of the people which filled the space on the right. No visible emotion escaped him ; but as he turned again, his eye fell upon the escutcheon which bore the newly-designed arms of the Commonwealth, on each side of which sat Oliver Cromwell and Henry Marten, and he sank into his seat. The guard attending him divided on each side of the court, and the servants who followed him to the bar stood on the left of their master.

Bradshaw now addressed the King, and told him that the Commons of England, assembled in parliament, being deeply sensible of the evils and calamities which had been brought on the nation, and the innocent blood that had been spilled, and having fixed on him as the principal author, had resolved to make inquisition for this blood, and to bring him to trial and judgment ; and had therefore constituted this court, before which he was brought to hear his charge, after which the court would proceed according to justice. Coke, then, the solicitor, delivered in, in writing the charge, which the clerk read. The King endeavoured to

interrupt the reading, but the president commanded the clerk to go on, and told Charles, that if he had anything to say after, the court would hear him. The charge stated, that he, the King, had been intrusted with a limited power to govern according to law; being obliged to use that power for the benefit of the people, and the preservation of their rights and liberties; but that he had designed to erect in himself an unlimited power, and to take away the remedy of misgovernment, reserved in the fundamental constitution, in the right and power of frequent and successive parliaments. It then proceeded to enumerate the principal occasions on which, in execution of his purpose of levying war on the present parliament, he had caused the blood of many thousands of the free people of this nation to be shed: and it affirmed all these purposes and this war to have been carried on for the upholding a personal interest of will and power, and a pretended prerogative to himself and his family, against the public interest, and common right, liberty, justice, and peace, of the people of this nation.—The charge being read, the president demanded Charles's answer.

During the reading Charles is said to have smiled at the words "tyrant" and "traitor" which occurred in the course of it. But, two or three minutes after, a trivial incident changed the current of his thoughts, and gave him a more awful sense of the situation in which he stood. In touching Coke gently on the shoulder with his cane, and bidding him 'Hold,' its gold head dropped off; and he, who was accustomed to be served with eager anticipation and slavish genuflexion, was left to take it up himself. This omen is said to have waked his superstition. It was no less calculated to affect him through his reason.

[After some days the trial drew to its end.]

The duty of "preparing the draft of a final sentence

with a blank for the manner of death," was now entrusted to Henry Marten (who had attended every day of the trial), to Thomas Scot, to Henry Ireton, to Harrison, Say, Lisle, and Love. The next day (the 26th of January) this sentence was engrossed at a private meeting, and the 27th appointed for the last sitting of the court.

On that memorable and most melancholy day, the King was brought for the last time to Westminster Hall. As he proceeded along the passages to the court, some of the soldiers and of the rabble set up a cry of "Justice!" "Justice, and execution!" These men distrusted the good faith of their leaders; and, seeing that six days had now passed without any conclusion, suspected, as the manner of rude and ignorant men is, that there was some foul play and treachery. One of the soldiers upon guard said, "God bless you, sir." The King thanked him; but his officer struck him with his cane. "The punishment," said Charles, "methinks, exceeds the offence." The King, when he had retired, asked Herbert, who attended him, whether he had heard the cry for justice; who answered, he did, and wondered at it. "So did not I," said Charles: "the cry was no doubt given by their officers, for whom the soldiers would do the like, were there occasion."

Placed for the last time at the bar, Charles without waiting for the address of Bradshaw, whose appearance betokened judgment, desired of the court, that, before an 'ugly sentence' was pronounced upon him, he might be heard *before the two houses of parliament*, he having something to suggest which nearly concerned the peace and liberty of the kingdom. The court would at once have rejected this proposal, (which was in effect tantamount to a demand for the reversal of all that had been done, and a revocation of the vote that had been passed, declaring the

people, under God, the original of all just power, and that the Commons house in parliament, as representing the people, were the supreme power,) but for the expressed dissatisfaction of Commissioner Downes, a timid and insincere man, in consequence of which the sitting was broken up, and the court retired to deliberate in private. They returned in half an hour, with an unanimous refusal of the request.

It is supposed by many writers, that Charles purposed, in case they had assented, to resign the crown in favour of his son. But if so, it has been fairly asked, Why did he not make the offer known in some other way? It would have produced its effect as certainly if promulgated in any other mode, and would at all events have bequeathed to posterity the full knowledge "to what extremity he was willing to advance for the welfare of his people, and to save his country from the stain of regicide." The supposition of that intention does scarcely, in fact, seem probable. Charles had wedded himself to his kingly office, and had now accustomed himself to look on death as the seal that should stamp their union and the fame of martyrdom, indelibly and for ever. His real purpose in making the request must remain a secret, equally with the well-considered motives of the commissioners in refusing it.

Bradshaw now rose to pronounce the sentence. "What sentence," he said, "the law affirms to a tyrant, traitor, and public enemy, that sentence you are now to hear read unto you, and that is the sentence of the court." The clerk then read it at large from a scroll of vellum. After reciting the appointment and purpose of the high court, the refusal of the King to acknowledge it, and the charges proved upon him, it concluded thus: "for all which treasons and crimes, this court doth adjudge that he the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer,

and public enemy, shall be put to death by severing his head from his body." Then Bradshaw again rose and said, "The sentence now read and published is the act, sentence, judgment, and resolution of the whole court ;" upon which, all the commissioners stood up by way of declaring their assent. The unhappy King now solicited permission to speak, but was refused. The words which passed between him and Bradshaw are worthy of record, as a most pathetic consummation of the melancholy scene. The fortitude and dignity which had sustained Charles throughout, appears at last to have somewhat given way ; but in its place we recognise a human suffering and agony of heart to the last degree affecting. "Will you hear me a word, sir?" he asked. "Sir," replied Bradshaw, "you are not to be heard after the sentence." "No, sir?" exclaimed the King. "No, sir, by your favour," retorted the president. "Guards, withdraw your prisoner." Charles then exclaimed, with a touching struggle of deep emotion, "I may speak after the sentence ! By your favour, sir !—I may speak after the sentence !—EVER !—By your favour——" A stern monosyllable from Bradshaw interrupted him,—“Hold !” and signs were given to the guards. With passionate entreaty the King again interfered. “The sentence, sir ! I say, sir, I do——” Again Bradshaw said, “Hold !” and the King was taken out of court as these words broke from him—“I am not suffered to speak. Expect what justice other people will have !”

XXVI.

EXECUTION OF CHARLES THE FIRST.

MASSON.

[Great efforts were made to save the King, but the Commons refused to spare his life, and on Tuesday, the thirtieth of January, 1649, he was beheaded at Whitehall.]

It was about ten o'clock in the morning when the procession was formed, from St. James's, through the Park, to Whitehall. With Bishop Juxon¹ on his right hand, Colonel Tomlinson on his left, Herbert² following close, and a guard of halberdiers in front and behind, the King walked, at his usual very fast pace, through the Park, soldiers lining the whole way, with colours flying and drums beating, and such a noise rising from the gathered crowd that it was hardly possible for any two in the procession to hear each other speak. Herbert had been told to bring with him the silver clock or watch that hung usually by the King's bedside, and on their way through the Park the King asked what o'clock it was and gave Herbert the watch to keep. A rude fellow from the mob kept abreast with the King for some time, staring at his face as if in wonder, till the Bishop had him turned away. There is a tradition that, when the procession came to the end of the Park, near the present passage from Spring Gardens, the King pointed to a tree, and said that tree had been planted by his brother Henry.

Arrived at last at the stairs leading into Whitehall, he was taken, through the galleries of the Palace, to the bed-

¹ *The Bishop of London.* ² *Charles's personal attendant.*

chamber he had usually occupied while residing there ; and here he had some farther time allowed him for rest and devotion with Juxon alone. Having sent Herbert for some bread and wine, he ate a mouthful of the bread and drank a small glass of claret. Here Herbert broke down so completely that he felt he could not accompany the King to the scaffold, and Juxon had to take from him the white satin cap he had brought by the King's orders, to be put on at the fatal moment. At last, a little after twelve o'clock, Hacker's³ signal was heard outside, and Juxon and Herbert went on their knees, affectionately kissing the King's hands. Juxon being old and feeble, the King helped him to rise, and then, commanding the door to be opened, followed Hacker. With soldiers for his guard, he was conveyed along some of the galleries of the old Palace, now no longer extant, to the New Banqueting Hall, which Inigo Jones had built, and which still exists. Besides the soldiers, many men and women had crowded into the Hall, from whom, as his Majesty passed on, there was heard a general murmur of commiseration and prayer, the soldiers themselves not objecting, but appearing grave and respectful.

Through a passage broken in the wall of the Banqueting Hall, or more probably through one of the windows, dismantled for the purpose, Charles emerged on the scaffold, in the open street, fronting the site of the present Horse Guards. The scaffold was hung with black, and carpeted with black, the block and the axe in the middle ; a number of persons already stood upon it, among whom were several men with black masks concealing their faces ; in the street in front all round the scaffold, were companies of foot and horse ; and beyond these, as far as the eye could reach,

³ Colonel Hacker commanded the soldiers set apart for the guard over the execution.

towards Charing Cross on the one side and Westminster Abbey on the other, was a closely packed multitude of spectators. The King, walking on the scaffold, looked earnestly at the block, and said something to Hacker as if he thought it were too low ; after which, taking out a small piece of paper, on which he had jotted some notes, he proceeded to address those standing near him.

What he said may have taken about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour to deliver, and appears, from the short-hand report of it which has been preserved, to have been rather incoherent. "Now, Sirs," he said at one point, "I must show you both how you are out of the way, and I will put you in the way. First, you are out of the way ; for certainly all the way you ever have had yet, as I could find by anything, is in the way of conquest. Certainly this is an ill way ; for conquest, Sirs, in my opinion, is never just, except there be a good just cause, either for matter of wrong, or just title ; and then, if you go beyond it, the first quarrel that you have to it, *that* makes it unjust at the end that was just at first." A little farther on, when he had begun a sentence, "For the King indeed I will not," a gentleman chanced to touch the axe. "Hurt not the axe," he interrupted ; "*that* may hurt me," and then resumed. "As for the King, the Laws of the Land will clearly instruct you for that : therefore, because it concerns my own particular, I only give you a touch of it. For the People : and truly I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whomsoever ; but I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consists of having of Government those laws by which their life and their goods may be most their own. It is not having *share* in Government, Sirs ; that is nothing pertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clean different things ; and therefore, until they do that—I mean, that you put the People in

that liberty, as I say—certainly they will never enjoy themselves.” In conclusion he said he would have liked to have a little more time, so as to have put what he meant to say “in a little more order, and a little better digested,” and gave the paper containing the heads of his speech to Juxon.

As he had said nothing specially about Religion, Juxon reminded him of the omission. “I thank you very heartily, my Lord,” said Charles, “for that I had almost forgotten it. In troth, Sirs, my conscience in Religion, I think it very well known to the world; and therefore I declare before you all that I die a Christian, according to the profession of the Church of England as I found it left me by my father; and this honest man (the Bishop) I think will witness it.” There were some more words addressed particularly to Hacker, and the other officers; and once more, seeing a gentleman go too near the axe, he called out, “Take heed of the axe; pray take heed of the axe.” Then, taking the white satin cap from Juxon, he put it on, and, with the assistance of Juxon and the chief executioner, pushed his hair all within it. Some final sentences of pious import then passed between the King and Juxon, and the King, having taken off his cloak and George, and given the latter to Juxon, with the word “Remember,” knelt down and put his neck on the block. After a second or two he stretched out his hands, and the axe descended, severing the head from the body at one blow. There was a vast shudder through the mob, and then a universal groan.

XXVII.

ESCAPE OF CHARLES THE SECOND.

GUIZOT.

[The death of the King was followed by the conquest of Ireland and Scotland. Both were wrought by Oliver Cromwell, who had done much to win the victories of Marston Moor and Naseby, and who became, on the resignation of Fairfax, Lord General of the Parliamentary Army. He subdued Ireland by measures of ruthless severity; invaded Scotland, which had proclaimed Charles, the son of the dead King, as its sovereign; won a great victory at Dunbar, and drove the young "King of Scots," as he was called, to march into England, in hope of raising a fresh civil war. At Worcester he was overtaken by Cromwell, utterly defeated, and driven to flight. He first sought shelter at a house in the valley of the Severn.]

WHITELADIES was the first asylum of Charles; he arrived there at daybreak on the fourth of September, scarcely twelve hours after having escaped from Worcester. He immediately cut off his hair, stained his hands and face, and assumed the coarse and threadbare garments of a peasant; and five brothers Penderell, all of them labourers, woodmen or domestics in the service of Mr. Giffard, undertook to secure his safety. "This is the King," said Mr. Giffard to William Penderell; "thou must have a care of him, and preserve him as thou didst me." They accordingly took Charles to Boscobel House, and concealed him in the adjoining woods. It was raining heavily: Richard Penderell procured a blanket, and spread it for the King under one of the largest trees; while his sister, Mrs. Yates, brought a supply of bread, milk, eggs, and

butter. "Good woman," said Charles to her, "can you be faithful to a distressed Cavalier?" "Yes, Sir," she replied, "and I will die sooner than betray you." Some soldiers passed on the outskirts of the wood, but did not enter it, because the storm was more violent over the wood than in the open fields. On the next day, the King concealed himself among the leafy branches of a large oak, and from this cover he could see the soldiers scouring the country in search of him. One night he left his hiding-place, to endeavour to cross the Severn, and take refuge in Wales; but as he was passing a mill with Richard Penderell, his guide, the miller called out, "Who goes there?" "Neighbours going home," answered Penderell. "If you be neighbours, stand," cried the miller, "or I will knock you down." They fled as fast as they could, and were pursued for some time by several men who came out of the mill with the miller. In another of their attempts to escape, while fording a small river, the King, who was a good swimmer, helped his guide across, as he was unable to swim.

He wandered for seven days in this manner through the country, changing his place of refuge almost daily, sometimes hidden beneath the hay in a barn, sometimes concealed in one of those obscure hiding-places which served as a retreat to the proscribed Catholic priests; hearing or seeing, at every moment, the republican soldiers who had been sent in search of him. In concert with his faithful guards, and with Lord Wilmot, who had rejoined him, he resolved to make for the sea-coast, near Bristol, in the hope of being able to find a vessel to take him over to France. He now changed his disguise, assumed a servant's livery instead of his peasant's garb, and set off on horseback, under the name of William Jackson, carrying behind him his mistress, Miss Jane Lane, sister of Colonel Lane.

of Bentley, his last place of refuge in Staffordshire "Will," said the colonel to him at starting, "thou must give my sister thy hand to help her to mount:" but the King, unused to such offices, gave her the wrong hand. "What a goodly horseman my daughter has got to ride before her," said old Mrs. Lane, the colonel's mother, who was watching their departure, though unacquainted with the secret. They set off, but they had scarcely ridden two hours, when the King's horse cast a shoe, and they halted at a little village to get another shoe. "As I was holding the horse's foot," says the King in his narrative of his escape, "I asked the smith what news. He told me that there was no news that he knew of, since the good news of the beating of those rogues, the Scots. I asked him whether there were none of the English taken that had joined with the Scots. He answered that some of them were taken, but he did not hear that that rogue, Charles Stuart, had been taken yet. I told him that, if that rogue were taken, he deserved to be hanged more than all the rest, for bringing in the Scots. Upon which he said that I spoke like an honest man; and so we parted."

On the 13th of September he reached Abbotsleigh, near Bristol, the residence of Mr. Norton, a cousin of Colonel Lane. He there learned, to his great sorrow, that there was not in the port of Bristol any vessel on board which he could embark; and he was obliged to remain in the house four days. Under pretence of indisposition, he was indulged in a separate chamber, and by Miss Lane's request, particular care was taken of him. He was really much harassed and fatigued, though but little inclined to endure patiently either hunger or ennui. On the morning after his arrival, he rose early, and went to the buttery-hatch to get his breakfast, where he found Pope, the butler, and two or three other servants; "and," he says, "we all fell to

eating bread and butter, to which Pope gave us very good ale and sack. As I was sitting there, there was one that looked like a country fellow sat just by me, who gave so particular an account of the battle of Worcester to the rest of the company, that I concluded he must be one of Cromwell's soldiers. But I asking him how he came to give so good an account of that battle ; he told me he was in the King's regiment ; and on questioning him further, I perceived that he had been in my regiment of guards. I asked him what kind of a man I was? To which he answered by describing exactly both my clothes and my horse ; and then looking upon me, he told me that the King was at least three fingers taller than I. Upon which I made what haste I could out of the buttry, for fear he should indeed know me ; being more afraid when I knew he was one of our own soldiers, than when I took him for one of the enemy's."

Charles had no sooner returned to his room, than one of his companions came to him in great agitation, and said : "What shall we do? I am afraid Pope the butler knows you, for he says very positively to me that it is you, but I have denied it." Charles had already learned that, in positions of danger, bold confidence is often no less a source of safety than a necessity ; he sent for the butler, told him all, and received from him, during his stay at Mr. Norton's house, the most intelligent and most devoted care.

But attentions, even when shown most discreetly, sometimes prove most compromising ; at the end of four days Charles had to seek a new asylum : and on the 14th of September, he left Abbotsieigh for Trent House, in the same county, the residence of Colonel Wyndham, a staunch Royalist. In 1636, six years before the outbreak of the war between Charles I. and his Parliament, Sir Thomas

Wyndham, the Colonel's father, when on the point of death, had said to his five sons—"My sons, we have hitherto seen serene and quiet times, but now prepare yourselves for cloudy and troublesome. I command you to honour and obey our gracious sovereign, and in all times to adhere to the crown; and though the crown should hang upon a bush, I charge you forsake it not." The injunctions of the dying man were obeyed; three of his sons and one of his grandsons fell on the battle-field, fighting for Charles I.; and Colonel Wyndham, who had also served with honour in the royal army, was, in 1651, a prisoner on parole in his own house. He received the King with the utmost devotedness, and set to work immediately to obtain some means of embarkation for him in one of the neighbouring ports.

[For some time, however, these efforts were fruitless, and so close a watch was kept that Charles was forced to leave the Dorset coast in despair, and return to Colonel Wyndham's.]

Charles remained for eleven days at Trent House, still seeking, but in vain, the means of transport to France. It then became necessary for him once more to change his residence. Colonel Wyndham was informed that his house was becoming more and more suspected; and ere long, troops arrived in the neighbourhood. On the 6th of October, the King left Trent House to take refuge at Hele House, the residence of Mr. Hyde in Wiltshire; where he would be nearer the small sea-ports of Sussex, at one of which his friends hoped to be able to procure him a vessel. They at last succeeded in obtaining one, and on the morning of the 13th of October, Charles left his last hiding-place, escorted by a few faithful friends, who had brought their dogs, as if for a coursing expedition on the downs. They slept at Hambledon, in Hampshire, at the house of a brother-in-law of Colonel Gunter, one of the

King's guides : and the master of the house, on his return home, was astonished to find his table surrounded by unknown guests, whose gaiety exceeded the bounds of "decent hilarity." The King's cropped hair, and the reproof which he administered to the honest squire for a casual oath, redoubled his surprise ; he bent towards his brother-in-law, and asked if that fellow were not "some-round-headed rogue's son." The colonel assured him that his suspicions were unfounded, upon which he sat down at table with his guests, and gaily drank the King's health "in a good glass of beer, calling him brother Roundhead."

On the following day, the 14th of October, they proceeded to Brightelmstone,¹ where they were to meet the master of the promised vessel, and the merchant who had engaged it for them. They all supped together at the village inn ; during the meal, the captain, Anthony Tattersall, scarcely once took his eyes off the King ; and after supper he took the merchant aside and told him "that he had not dealt fairly with him ; for though he had given him a very good price for carrying over that gentleman, yet he had not been clear with him ;—for," said he, "he is the King, and I very well know him to be so." The merchant assured him that he was mistaken, but he answered : "No, I am not ; for he took my ship, together with other fishing vessels at Brightelmstone, in the year 1648, when he commanded his father's fleet ; but be not troubled at it, for I think I do God and my country good service in preserving the King, and by the grace of God, I will venture my life and all for him, and set him safely on shore, if I can, in France." At about the same time, at another part of the room, the innkeeper came up to the King, who was standing by the fire, with his hand resting on the back of a chair, and kissed his hand suddenly. "God bless you wheresoever you go !" he said ;

¹ *Then a little fishing village, now the large town of Brighton.*

“I do not doubt, before I die, to be a lord, and my wife a lady.” Charles laughed, and went into another room, putting full trust in his host ; and at five o’clock on the morning of the 15th of October, the King and Lord Wilmot were on board a little vessel of sixty tons, which only waited for the tide to leave Shoreham harbour. As soon as they were at sea, Captain Tattersall came into the cabin where the King was lying, fell on his knees, kissed his hand, and protesting his entire devotedness, suggested that, in order to prevent all difficulty, he should himself persuade the crew, who imagined that they had embarked for the English port of Poole, to sail towards the coast of France, by representing himself to them as a merchant in debt, who was afraid of being arrested in England, and wished to recover some money that was owing to him at Rouen. Charles willingly acceded to this proposition, and tried to ingratiate himself so thoroughly with the sailors, that they joined him in requesting the captain to turn aside from his course in favour of his passengers. The weather was fine and the wind favourable, and at one o’clock in the afternoon of the 16th of October, the ship’s boat landed the King and Lord Wilmot in the little port of Fécamp.

XXVIII.

DRIVING OUT OF LONG PARLIAMENT.

GUIZOT.

No sooner was all danger from without over than the victors quarrelled among themselves. The Parliament wished to break up the army, and the army in return resolved to drive out the Parliament if it did not consent to dissolve itself, and enable a fresh House of Commons to

be chosen. Quarrels, however, arose over the bill introduced for this purpose, and Cromwell forcibly carried out the army's threat.]

THE House was on the point of coming to a vote ; Vane¹ had insisted with such warmth and earnestness on passing the bill, that Harrison² had deemed it necessary "most sweetly and humbly" to conjure his colleagues to pause before they took so important a step. Cromwell left Whitehall in haste, followed by Lambert and five or six officers ; and commanded a detachment of soldiers to march round to the House of Commons. On his arrival at Westminster, he stationed guards at the doors and in the lobby of the House, and led round another body to a position just outside the room in which the members were seated. He then entered alone, without noise, "clad in plain black clothes, with grey worsted stockings," as was his custom when he was not in uniform. Vane was speaking, and passionately descanting on the urgency of the bill. Cromwell sat down in his usual place, where he was instantly joined by St. John,³ to whom he said, "that he was come to do that which grieved him to the very soul, and that he had earnestly with tears prayed to God against. Nay, that he had rather be torn in pieces than do it ; but there was a necessity laid upon him therein, in order to the glory of God, and the good of the nation." St. John answered, "that he knew not what he meant ; but did pray that what it was which must be done, might have a happy issue for the general good ;" and so saying, he returned to his seat.

Vane was still speaking, and Cromwell listened to him with great attention. He was arguing the necessity of

¹ *Sir Harry Vane, a leading statesman of the Long Parliament.* ² *General Harrison.* ³ *Oliver St. John, who had taken a leading part in the Parliament.*

proceeding at once to the last stage of the bill, and with that view, adjured the House to dispense with the usual formalities which should precede its adoption. Cromwell, at this, beckoned to Harrison. "Now is the time," he said; "I must do it!" "Sir," replied Harrison, anxiously, "the work is very great and dangerous." "You say well," answered Cromwell, and sat still for another quarter of an hour. Vane ceased speaking; the Speaker rose to put the question, when Cromwell stood up, took off his hat, and began to speak. At first he expressed himself in terms of commendation of the Parliament, and its members, praising their zeal and care for the public good; but gradually his tone changed, his accents and gestures became more violent; he reproached the members of the House with their delays, their covetousness, their self-interest, their disregard for justice. "You have no heart to do anything for the public good," he exclaimed; "your intention was to perpetuate yourselves in power. But your time is come! The Lord has done with you! He has chosen other instruments for the carrying on His work, that are more worthy. It is the Lord hath taken me by the hand, and set me on to do this thing." Vane, Wentworth, and Martyn⁴ rose to reply to him, but he would not suffer them to speak. "You think, perhaps," he said, "that this is not parliamentary language; I know it; but expect no other language from me." Wentworth at length made himself heard; he declared that this "was indeed the first time that he had ever heard such unbecoming language given to the Parliament; and that it was the more horrid, in that it came from their servant, and their servant whom they had so highly trusted and obliged, and whom, by their unprecedented bounty, they had made what he was." Cromwell thrust his hat upon his head, sprang from his seat into the

⁴ *Henry Martyn, one of the judges of the King.*

centre of the floor of the House, and shouted out, "Come, come, we have had enough of this ; I'll put an end to your prating—Call them in !" he added briefly to Harrison ; the door opened, and twenty or thirty musketeers entered, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Worsley.

"You are no Parliament," cried Cromwell ; "I say, you are no Parliament ! Begone ! Give way to honest men." He walked up and down the floor of the House, stamping his foot, and giving his orders. "Fetch him down," he said to Harrison, pointing to the Speaker, who still remained in his chair. Harrison told him to come down, but Lenthall refused. "Take him down," repeated Cromwell ; Harrison laid his hand on the Speaker's gown, and he came down immediately. Algernon Sidney^b was sitting near the Speaker. "Put him out," said Cromwell to Harrison. Sidney did not move. "Put him out," reiterated Cromwell. Harrison and Worsley laid their hands on Sidney's shoulders, upon which he rose and walked out. "This is not honest," exclaimed Vane ; "it is against morality and common honesty !" "Sir Harry Vane ! Sir Harry Vane !" replied Cromwell ; "you might have prevented this extraordinary course ; but you are a juggler, and have not so much as common honesty. The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane !" And, amidst the general confusion as the members passed out before him, he flung nicknames in the face of each. "Some of you are drunkards !" he said, pointing to Mr. Challoner ; "some of you are adulterers !" and he looked at Sir Peter Wentworth ; "some of you are corrupt unjust persons !" and he glanced at Whitelocke and others.

He went up to the table on which the mace lay, which was carried before the Speaker, and called to the soldiers, "What shall we do with this bauble ? here, take it away."

^b *Afterwards put to death under Charles the Second.*

He frequently repeated : " It is you that have forced me to this, for I have sought the Lord night and day, that He would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work." Alderman Allen told him, " That it was not yet gone so far, but all things might be restored again ; and that if the soldiers were commanded out of the House, and the mace returned, the public affairs might go on in their course." Cromwell rejected this advice, and called Allen to account for some hundred thousand pounds which as Treasurer of the army, he had embezzled. Allen replied, " That it was well known that it had not been his fault that his account was not made up long since ; that he had often tendered it to the House, and that he asked no favour from any man in that matter." Cromwell ordered him to be arrested, and he was led off by the soldiers. The room was now empty ; he seized all the papers, took the Dissolution-Bill from the Clerk, and put it under his cloak : after which he left the House, ordered the doors to be shut, and returned to Whitehall.

At Whitehall, he found several of his officers, who had remained there to wait the event. He related to them what he had done at the House. " When I went there," he said, " I did not think to have done this. But, perceiving the Spirit of God so strong upon me, I would not consult flesh and blood." A few hours later, in the afternoon, he was informed that the Council of State had just assembled in its ordinary place of meeting, in Whitehall itself, under the presidency of Bradshaw. He went to them immediately, followed only by Harrison and Lambert. " Gentlemen," he said, " if you are met here as private persons, you shall not be disturbed ; but if as a Council of State, this is no place for you ; and since you can't but know what was done at the House this morning, so take notice that the Parliament is dissolved." " Sir," answered Bradshaw, " we have

heard what you did at the House in the morning, and before many hours all England will hear it. But, Sir, you are mistaken to think that the Parliament is dissolved ; for no power under heaven can dissolve them but themselves. Therefore take you notice of that." All then rose and left the room. On the following day, the 21st of April, this announcement appeared in the *Mercurius Politicus*,⁶ which had become Cromwell's journal: "The Lord-General delivered yesterday in Parliament divers reasons wherefore a present period should be put to the sitting of this Parliament, and it was accordingly done, the Speaker and the members all departing. The grounds of which proceedings will, it is probable, be shortly made public." And, on the same day, a crowd collected at the door of the House to read a large placard which had probably been placed there during the night by some Cavalier who was overjoyed at finding his cause avenged on the republicans by a regicide ;⁷ it bore this inscription :

"This House to be let unfurnished."

XXIX.

DEATH OF CROMWELL.

GUIZOT.

[After the expulsion of the Commons, England really lay in the power of the army : and its general, Oliver Cromwell, became ruler of the country with the title of Lord Protector. Cromwell was a man of great genius ; and he made the name of England feared abroad by great victories, both on land and sea. But at home he failed to reconcile the nation to what was after all but a military

⁶ *One of the earliest English newspapers.* ⁷ *The judges on the King's trial were called by the royalists regicides.*

rule ; and the Parliament he summoned demanded the restoration of the old liberties of England. It was to bring back the constitution and restore the rule of law that the Commons at last offered Cromwell the title of King. But he was forced by the army to refuse it ; and soon after a fever brought him to the grave.]

It was no mere pedantry, still less was it vulgar flattery, which influenced the Parliament in their offer to Cromwell of the title of King. The experience of the last few years had taught the nation the value of the traditional forms under which its liberties had grown up. A king was limited by constitutional precedents. "The king's prerogative," it was well urged, "is under the courts of justice, and is bounded as well as any acre of land, or anything a man hath." A Protector, on the other hand, was new in our history and there were no traditional means of limiting his power. "The one office being lawful in its nature," said Glynne,¹ "known to the nation, certain in itself, and confined and regulated by the law, and the other not so—that was the great ground why the Parliament did so much insist on this office and title." Under the name of monarchy indeed the question really at issue between the party headed by the officers and the party led by the lawyers in the Commons was that of the restoration of constitutional and legal rule. The proposal was carried by an overwhelming majority, but a month passed in endless consultations between the Parliament and the Protector. His good sense, his knowledge of the general feeling of the nation, his real desire to obtain a settlement which should secure the ends for which Puritanism had fought, political and religious liberty, broke, in conference after conference, through a mist of words. But his real concern throughout was with the temper of the army. To Cromwell his soldiers were no common swordsmen.

¹ *Glynne was one of the leaders in the Parliament.*

They were "godly men, men that will not be beaten down by a worldly and carnal spirit while they keep their integrity," men in whose general voice he recognized the voice of God. "They are honest and faithful men," he urged, "true to the great things of the Government. And though it is really no part of their goodness to be unwilling to submit to what a Parliament shall settle over them, yet it is my duty and conscience to beg of you that there may be no hard things put upon them which they cannot swallow. I cannot think God would bless an undertaking of anything which would justly and with cause grieve them." The temper of the army was soon shown. Its leaders with Lambert, Fleetwood, and Desborough² at their head, placed their commands in Cromwell's hands. A petition from the officers to Parliament demanded the withdrawal of the proposal to restore the monarchy, "in the name of the old cause for which they had bled." Cromwell at once anticipated the coming debate on this petition, a debate which might have led to an open breach between the army and the Commons, by a refusal of the crown. "I cannot undertake this government," he said, "with that title of king; and that is my answer to this great and weighty business."

Disappointed as it was, the Parliament with singular self-restraint turned to other modes of bringing about its purpose. The offer of the crown had been coupled with the condition of accepting a Constitution, which was a modification of the Instrument of Government³ adopted by the Parliament of 1654, and this Constitution Cromwell emphatically approved. "The things provided by this Act of Government," he owned, "do secure the liberties of the people of God as they never before have had them." With a change of the title of king into that of Protector, the Act

² *The leading generals in the army, after Cromwell.*

³ *A plan originally drawn up by the officers of the army for the new rule after the king's death.*

of Government became law : and the solemn inauguration of the Protector by the Parliament was a practical acknowledgement on the part of Cromwell of the illegality of his former rule. In the name of the Commons the Speaker invested him with a mantle of state, placed the sceptre in his hand, and girt the sword of justice by his side. By the new Act of Government Cromwell was allowed to name his own successor, but in all after cases the office was to be an elective one. In every other respect the forms of the older Constitution were carefully restored. Parliament was again to consist of two Houses, the seventy members of the other House being named by the Protector. The Commons regained their old right of exclusively deciding on the qualification of their members. Parliamentary restrictions were imposed on the choice of members of the Council, and officers of the state or of the army. A fixed revenue was voted to the Protector, and it was provided that no moneys should be raised but by assent of Parliament. Liberty of worship was secured for all but Papists, Prelatists,⁴ Socinians or those who denied the inspiration of the Scriptures, and liberty of conscience was secured to all.

The excluded members were again admitted when the Parliament reassembled after an adjournment of six months ; and the hasty act of Cromwell in giving his nominees in "the other House" the title of Lords kindled a quarrel which was busily fanned by Haselrig.⁵ But while the Houses were busy with their squabble the hand of death was falling on the Protector. He had long been weary of his task. "God knows," he burst out a little time before to the Parliament, "I would have been glad to have lived under my woodside, and to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than to have undertaken this government." And now to the weariness of power was added the weakness

⁴ *Episcopalians of the Church of England, believed to be disaffected to the new government.*

⁵ *A leading republican.*

and feverish impatience of disease. Vigorous and energetic as his life had seemed, his health was by no means as strong as his will; he had been struck down by intermittent fever in the midst of his triumphs both in Scotland and in Ireland, and during the past year he had suffered from repeated attacks of it. "I have some infirmities upon me," he owned twice over in his speech at the opening of the Parliament; and his feverish irritability was quickened by the public danger. No supplies had been voted, and the pay of the army was heavily in arrear, while its temper grew more and more sullen at the appearance of the new Constitution and the reawakening of the Royalist intrigues. The continuance of the Parliamentary strife threw Cromwell at last, says an observer at his court, "into a rage and passion like unto madness." Summoning his coach, by a sudden impulse, the Protector drove with a few guards to Westminster; and, setting aside the remonstrances of Fleetwood, summoned the two Houses to his presence. "I do dissolve this Parliament," he ended a speech of angry rebuke, "and let God be judge between you and me."

Fatal as was the error, for the moment all went well. The army was reconciled by the blow levelled at its opponents, and the few murmurers were weeded from its ranks by a careful remodelling. The triumphant officers vowed to stand or fall with his Highness. The danger of a Royalist rising vanished before a host of addresses from the counties. Great news too came from abroad, where victory in Flanders, and the cession of Dunkirk, set the seal on Cromwell's glory. But the fever crept steadily on, and his looks told the tale of death to the Quaker, Fox,⁶ who met him riding in Hampton Court Park. "Before I came to him," he says, "as he rode at the head of his Life Guards, I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him, and when I came to

⁶ *George Fox, the founder of the sect of Quakers.*

him he looked like a dead man." In the midst of his triumph Cromwell's heart was in fact heavy with the sense of failure. He had no desire to play the tyrant ; nor had he any belief in the permanence of a mere tyranny. He had hardly dissolved the Parliament before he was planning he summons of another, and angry at the opposition which his Council offered to the project. "I will take my own resolutions," he said gloomily to his household ; "I can no longer satisfy myself to sit still, and make myself guilty of the loss of all the honest party and of the nation itself." But before his plans could be realized the overtaxed strength of the Protector suddenly gave way. He saw too clearly the chaos into which his death would plunge England to be willing to die. "Do not think I shall die," he burst out with feverish energy to the physicians who gathered round him ; "say not I have lost my reason ! I tell you the truth. I know it from better authority than any you can have from Galen or Hippocrates. It is the answer of God Himself to our prayers !" Prayer indeed rose from every side for his recovery, but death drew steadily nearer, till even Cromwell felt that his hour was come. "I would be willing to live," the dying man murmured, "to be further serviceable to God and His people, but my work is done ! Yet God will be with His people !" A storm which tore roofs from houses, and levelled huge trees in every forest, seemed a fitting prelude to the passing away of his mighty spirit. Three days later, on the third of September, the day which had witnessed his victories of Worcester and Dunbar, Cromwell quietly breathed his last.

READINGS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

PART III.

FROM CROMWELL TO BALACLAVA.



PROSE READINGS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

PART III.

I.

THE RESTORATION.

MACAULAY.

[The death of Cromwell brought the rule of Puritanism to an end. The divisions of the army which occupied the three realms quarrelled among themselves; and the nation took advantage of their strife to set up again the old system of government, and to recall Charles the Second to the throne. No political change was ever welcomed with so much joy as this restoration of the monarchy, for in it men saw the restoration of law and the overthrow of a rule of the sword.]

If we had to choose a lot from among all the multitude of those which men have drawn since the beginning of the world, we would select that of Charles the Second on the day of his return. He was in a situation in which the dictates of ambition coincided with those of benevolence, in which it was easier to be virtuous than to be wicked, to be loved than to be hated, to earn pure and imperishable glory than to become infamous. For once the road of

goodness was a smooth descent. He had done nothing to merit the affection of his people. But they had paid him in advance without measure. Elizabeth, after the destruction of the Armada, or after the abolition of monopolies, had not excited a thousandth part of the enthusiasm with which the young exile was welcomed home. He was not like Lewis the Eighteenth,¹ imposed on his subjects by foreign conquerors; nor did he, like Lewis the Eighteenth, come back to a country which had undergone a complete change. Happily for Charles, no European state, even when at war with the Commonwealth, had chosen to bind up its cause with that of the wanderers who were playing in the garrets of Paris and Cologne at being princes and chancellors.² Under the administration of Cromwell, England was more respected and dreaded than any power in Christendom, and even under the ephemeral governments which followed his death no foreign state ventured to treat her with contempt. Thus Charles came back, not as a mediator between his people and a victorious enemy, but as a mediator between internal factions. He found the Scotch Covenanters and the Irish Papists alike subdued. He found Dunkirk and Jamaica added to the empire.³ He was heir to the conquests and to the influence of the able usurper who had excluded him.

The old government of England, as it had been far milder than the old government of France, had been far less violently and completely subverted. The national institutions had been spared or imperfectly eradicated. The laws had undergone little alteration. The tenures of the soil

¹ *The French king who was set on the throne after the overthrow of Napoleon by the European powers.* ² *During his exile Charles had called himself king, appointed ministers, and the like.* ³ *Jamaica had been taken by an English fleet; Dunkirk taken as the price of the aid of an English army in the war of France against Spain.*

were still to be learned from Littleton and Coke.⁴ The Great Charter was mentioned with as much reverence in the Parliaments of the Commonwealth as in those of any earlier or of any later age. A new confession of faith and a new ritual had been introduced into the Church. But the bulk of the ecclesiastical property still remained. The colleges still held their estates. The parson still received his tithes. The Lords had, at a crisis of great excitement, been excluded by military violence from their house ; but they retained their titles and an ample share of the public veneration. When a nobleman made his appearance in the House of Commons he was received with ceremonious respect. Those few peers who consented to assist at the inauguration of the Protector were placed next to himself, and the most honourable offices of the day were assigned to them. We learn from the debates in Richard's Parliament how strong a hold the old aristocracy had on the affections of the people. One member of the House of Commons went so far as to say that, unless their Lordships were peaceably restored, the country might soon be convulsed by a war of the Barons.

There was indeed no great party hostile to the Upper House. There was nothing exclusive in the constitution of that body. It was regularly recruited from among the most distinguished of the country gentlemen, the lawyers, and the clergy. The most powerful nobles of the century which preceded the civil war, the Duke of Somerset, the Duke of Northumberland, Lord Seymour of Sudely, the Earl of Leicester, Lord Burleigh, the Earl of Salisbury, the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Strafford had all been commoners, and had all raised themselves by courtly arts or by parliamentary talents, not merely to seats in the House of Lords, but to the first influence in that assembly. Nor had the

⁴ *Compendiums of English law at the time.*

general conduct of the Peers been such as to make them unpopular. They had not, indeed, in opposing arbitrary measures shown so much eagerness and pertinacity as the Commons. But still they had opposed those measures. They had, at the beginning of the discontents, a common interest with the people. If Charles⁵ had succeeded in his plan of governing without parliaments, the consequence of the Peers would have been grievously diminished. If he had been able to raise taxes by his own authority, the estates of the Peers would have been as much at his mercy as those of the merchants or of the farmers. If he had obtained the power of imprisoning his subjects at his pleasure, a Peer ran far greater risk of incurring the royal displeasure, and of being accommodated with apartments in the Tower, than any city trader or country squire. Accordingly Charles found that the Great Council of Peers which he convoked at York⁶ would do nothing for him. In the most useful reforms which were made during the first session of the Long Parliament, the Peers concurred heartily with the Lower House, and a large and powerful minority of the English nobles stood by the popular side through the first years of the war. At Edgehill, Newbury, Marston, and Naseby, the armies of the Parliament were commanded by members of the aristocracy. It was not forgotten that a Peer had imitated the example of Hampden in refusing the payment of the ship money, or that a Peer had been among the six members of the legislature whom Charles illegally impeached.

Thus the old constitution of England was without difficulty re-established; and of all the parts of the old constitution, the monarchical part was, at the time, dearest to the body of the people. It had been injudiciously depressed, and it was in consequence unduly exalted. From the day

⁵ *Charles the First.*

⁶ *Before the summoning again of his Parliament.*

when Charles the First became a prisoner had commenced a reaction in favour of his person and of his office. From the day when the axe fell on his neck before the windows of his palace, that reaction became rapid and violent. At the Restoration it had attained such a point that it could go no further. The people were ready to place at the mercy of their sovereign all their most ancient and precious rights. The most servile doctrines were publicly avowed. The most moderate and constitutional opposition was condemned. Resistance was spoken of with more horror than any crime which a human being can commit. The Commons were more eager than the King himself to avenge the wrongs of the royal house : more desirous than the bishops themselves to restore the Church ; more ready to give money than the ministers to ask for it. They abrogated the excellent law passed in the first session of the Long Parliament, with the general consent of all honest men, to ensure the frequent meeting of the Great Council of the nation. They might probably have been induced to go further, and to restore the High Commission and the Star Chamber. All the contemporary accounts represent the nation as in a state of hysterical excitement, of drunken joy. In the immense multitude which crowded the beach at Dover, and bordered the road along which the King travelled to London, there was not one who was not weeping. Bonfires blazed. Bells jangled. The streets were thronged at night by boon-companions, who forced all the passers-by to swallow on bended knees brimming glasses to the health of his Most Sacred Majesty, and the damnation of Red-nosed Noll.⁷ That tenderness to the fallen which has through many generations been a marked feature of the national character, was for a time hardly discernible. All London crowded to shout and

⁷ *Oliver Cromwell.*

laugh round the gibbet⁸ where hung the rotting remains of a prince who had made England the dread of all the world, who had been the chief founder of her maritime greatness, and of her colonial empire, who had conquered Scotland and Ireland, who had humbled Holland and Spain, the terror of whose name had been as a guard round every English traveller in remote countries, and round every Protestant congregation in the heart of Catholic empires. When some of those brave and honest, though misguided men, who had sate in judgement on their King were dragged on hurdles to a death of prolonged torture, their last prayers were interrupted by the hisses and execrations of thousands.

II.

CHARLES THE SECOND.

GREEN.

[All the moral change which Puritanism had striven to bring about disappeared with its fall; and piety and right conduct were trampled under foot by the nobles and courtiers who surrounded the new king. The most dissolute man in the realm was Charles the Second himself.]

To all outer seeming Charles was the most consummate of idlers. "He delighted," says one of his courtiers, "in a bewitching kind of pleasure called sauntering." The business-like Pepys¹ soon discovered that "the King do mind nothing but pleasure, and hates the very sight or thoughts

⁸ *Cromwell's body was torn from its grave and hanged on the gibbet at Tyburn.*

¹ *An official whose diary tells us much of the time.*

of business." He only laughed when Tom Killigrew frankly told him that badly as things were going there was one man whose employment would soon set them right, "and this is one Charles Stuart, who now spends his time in employing his lips about the court, and hath no other employment." That Charles had great natural parts no one doubted. In his earlier days of defeat and danger he showed a cool courage and presence of mind which never failed him in the many perilous moments of his reign. His temper was pleasant and social; his manners perfect, and there was a careless freedom and courtesy in his address which won over everybody who came into his presence. His education, indeed, had been so grossly neglected that he could hardly read a plain Latin book; but his natural quickness and intelligence showed itself in his pursuit of chymistry and anatomy, and in the interest he showed in the scientific inquiries of the Royal Society. Like Peter the Great, his favourite study was that of naval architecture, and he piqued himself on being a clever shipbuilder. He had some little love, too, for art and poetry, and a taste for music. But his shrewdness and vivacity showed itself most in his endless talk. He was fond of telling stories, and he told them with a good deal of grace and humour. His humour, indeed, never forsook him; even on his death-bed he turned to the weeping courtiers around him and whispered an apology for having been so unconscionable a time in dying. He held his own fairly with the wits of his court, and bandied repartees on equal terms with Sedley or Buckingham. Even Rochester in his merciless epigram was forced to own that "Charles never said a foolish thing." He had inherited in fact his grandfather's gift of pithy sayings, and his cynical irony often gave an amusing turn to them. When his brother, the most unpopular man in England,² solemnly warned him

² *James, Duke of York, afterwards James the Second.*

of plots against his life, Charles laughingly bid him set all fear aside. "They will never kill me, James," he said, "to make you king."

But courage, and wit, and ability seemed to have been bestowed on him in vain. Charles hated business. He gave no sign of ambition. The one thing he seemed in earnest about was sensual pleasure, and he took his pleasure with a cynical shamelessness which roused the disgust even of his shameless courtiers. Mistress followed mistress, and the guilt of a troop of profligate women was blazoned to the world by the gift of titles and estates. The royal bastards were set amongst English nobles. The ducal house of Grafton springs from the king's adultery with Barbara Palmer, whom he created Duchess of Cleveland. The Dukes of St. Albans owe their origin to his intrigue with Nell Gwynn, a player and a courtesan. Louise de Querouaille, a mistress sent by France to win him to its interests, became Duchess of Portsmouth, an ancestress of the house of Richmond. An earlier mistress, Lucy Walters, had made him father in younger days of the boy whom he raised to the dukedom of Monmouth, and to whom the Dukes of Buccleuch trace their line. But Charles was far from being content with these recognised mistresses, or with a single form of self-indulgence. Gambling and drinking helped to fill up the vacant moments when he could no longer toy with his favourites or bet at Newmarket. No thought of remorse or of shame seems ever to have crossed his mind. "He could not think God would make a man miserable," he said once, "only for taking a little pleasure out of the way." From shame, indeed, he was shielded by his cynical disbelief in human virtue. Virtue he regarded simply as a trick by which clever hypocrites imposed upon fools. Honour among men seemed to him as mere a pretence as chastity among women. Gratitude he had none, for he

looked upon self-interest as the only motive of men's actions, and though soldiers had died and women had risked their lives for him, he "loved others as little as he thought they loved him." But if he felt no gratitude for benefits he felt no resentment for wrongs. He was incapable either of love or of hate. The only feeling he retained for his fellow-men was that of an amused contempt.

It was difficult for Englishmen to believe that any real danger to liberty could come from an idler and a voluptuary such as Charles the Second. But in the very difficulty of believing this lay half the king's strength. He had in fact no taste whatever for the despotism of the Stuarts who had gone before him. His shrewdness laughed his grandfather's theories of Divine Right down the wind. His indolence made such a personal administration as that which his father delighted in burthensome to him : he was too humorous a man to care for the pomp and show of power, and too good natured a man to play the tyrant. He told Lord Essex "that he did not wish to be like a Grand Signior, with some mutes about him, and bags of bowstrings to strangle men ; but he did not think he was a king so long as a company of fellows were looking into his actions and examining his ministers as well as his accounts. A king," he thought, "who might be checked, and have his ministers called to account, was but a king in name." In other words he had no settled plan of tyranny, but he meant to rule as independently as he could, and from the beginning to the end of his reign there never was a moment when he was not doing something to carry out his aim. But he carried it out in a tentative, irregular fashion which it was as hard to detect as to meet. Whenever there was any strong opposition he gave way. If popular feeling demanded the dismissal of his ministers, he dismissed them. If it protested against his Declaration of Indulgence he recalled it. If it called for

victims in the frenzy of the Popish Plot, he gave it victims till the frenzy was at an end.

It was easy for Charles to yield and to wait, and just as easy for him to take up the thread of his purpose again the moment the pressure was over. The one fixed resolve which overrode every other thought in the king's mind was a resolve "not to set out on his travels again." His father³ had fallen through a quarrel with the two Houses, and Charles was determined to remain on good terms with the Parliament till he was strong enough to pick a quarrel to his profit. He treated the Lords with an easy familiarity which robbed opposition of its seriousness. "Their debates amused him," he said, in his indolent way; and he stood chatting before the fire while peer after peer poured invectives on his ministers, and laughed louder than the rest when Shaftesbury directed his coarsest taunts at the barrenness of the queen. Courtiers were entrusted with the secret "management" of the Commons: obstinate country gentlemen were brought to the royal closet to kiss the king's hand, and listen to the king's pleasant stories of his escape after Worcester; and yet more obstinate country gentlemen were bribed. Where bribes, flattery, and management failed, Charles was content to yield and to wait till his time came again.

³ *Charles the First.*

III.

“THE PILGRIM’S PROGRESS.”

GREEN.

[One of the most fatal results of the Restoration of Charles to the throne was the loss of religious liberty. Laws were made which required all Englishmen to conform to the episcopal Church, and punished those who attended the worship of any other religious body with imprisonment. Among the ministers who were thus punished was John Bunyan, the writer of “The Pilgrim’s Progress.”]

JOHN BUNYAN was the son of a poor tinker at Elstow in Bedfordshire. Even in childhood his fancy revelled in terrible visions of heaven and hell. “When I was but a child of nine or ten years old,” he tells us, “these things did so distress my soul, that then in the midst of my merry sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith; yet could I not let go my sins.” The sins he could not let go were a love of hockey and of dancing on the village green; for the only real fault which his bitter self-accusation discloses, that of a habit of swearing, was put an end to at once and for ever by a rebuke from an old woman. His passion for bell-ringing clung to him even after he had broken from it as a “vain practice;” and he would go to the steeple-house¹ and look on, till the thought that a bell might fall and crush him in his sins drove him panic-stricken from the door. A sermon against dancing and games drew him for a time from these indulgences; but the temptation again overmastered his resolve. “I shook the sermon out of my mind, and to my old custom of sports and gaming I

¹ *The church.*

returned with great delight. But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game of cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, 'Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?' At this I was put in an exceeding maze; wherefore, leaving my cat upon the ground I looked up to heaven; and was as if I had with the eyes of my understanding seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if He did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for those and other ungodly practices."

It was in this atmosphere of excited feeling that the youth of Bunyan was spent. From his childhood he heard heavenly voices, and saw visions of heaven; from his childhood, too, he had been wrestling with this overpowering sense of sin, which sickness and repeated escapes from death did much, as he grew up, to deepen. But in spite of his self-reproaches, his life was a religious one; and the purity and sobriety of his youth was shown by his admission at seventeen into the ranks of the "New Model."² Two years later the war³ was over, and Bunyan found himself married before he was twenty to a "godly" wife, as young and as poor as himself. So poor were the young couple that they could hardly muster a spoon and a plate between them; and the poverty of their home deepened, perhaps, the gloom of the young tinker's restlessness and religious depression. His wife did what she could to comfort him, teaching him again to read and write, for he had forgotten his school-learning, and reading with him in two little "godly" books, which formed his library. But the darkness only gathered the thicker round his imaginative soul. "I walked," he tells us of this time, "to a neighbouring town, and sate down

² *The Puritan army.*

³ *Against Charles the First.*

upon a settle in the street, and fell into a very deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to ; and after long musing I lifted up my head ; but methought I saw as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give me light ; and as if the very stones in the street and tiles upon the houses did band themselves against me. Methought that they all combined together to banish me out of the world. I was abhorred of them, and wept to dwell among them, because I had sinned against the Saviour. Oh, how happy now was every creature over I ! for they stood fast and kept their station. But I was gone and lost."

At last, after more than two years of this struggle, the darkness broke. Bunyan felt himself "converted," and freed from the burthen of his sin. He joined a Baptist church at Bedford, and a few years later he became famous as a preacher. As he held no formal post of minister in the congregation his preaching even under the Protectorate⁴ was illegal, and "gave great offence" he tells us, "to the doctors and priests of that county," but he persisted with little real molestation until the Restoration. Six months after the king's return he was committed to Bedford Gaol on a charge of preaching in unlicensed conventicles ; and his refusal to promise to abstain from preaching, kept him there eleven years. The gaol was crowded with prisoners like himself, and amongst them he continued his ministry, supporting himself by making tagged thread-laces and finding some comfort in the Bible, the "Book of Martyrs," and the writing materials which he was suffered to have with him in prison. But he was in the prime of life ; his age was thirty-two when he was imprisoned, and the inactivity and severance from his wife and little children was hard to bear. "The parting with my wife and poor children," he says in words

⁴ *Of Cromwell.*

of simple pathos, "hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of the flesh from the bones, and that not only because I should have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries, and wants that my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer to my heart than all besides. Oh, the thoughts of the hardships I thought my poor blind one might go under would break my heart to pieces. 'Poor child,' thought I, 'what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow upon thee.'"

But suffering could not break his purpose, and Bunyan found compensation for the narrow bounds of his prison in the wonderful activity of his pen. Tracts, controversial treatises, poems, meditations, his "Grace Abounding," and his "Holy City," followed each other in quick succession. It was in his gaol that he wrote the first and greatest part of his "Pilgrim's Progress." In no book do we see more clearly the new imaginative force which had been given to the common life of Englishmen by their study of the Bible. Its English is the simplest and the homeliest English which has ever been used by any great English writer; but it is the English of the Bible. The images of the "Pilgrim's Progress" are the images of prophet and evangelist; it borrows for its tenderer outbursts the very verse of the Song of Songs, and pictures the heavenly city in the words of the Apocalypse. But so completely has the Bible become Bunyan's life that one feels its phrases as the natural expression of his thoughts. He has lived in the Bible till its words have become his own. He has lived among its visions and voice of heaven till all sense of possible unreality has died away. He tells his tale with such a perfect naturalness that

allegories become living things, that the Slough of Despond and Doubting Castle are as real to us as places we see every day, that we know Mr. Legality and Mr. Worldly Wiseman as if we had met them in the street. It is in this amazing reality of impersonation that Bunyan's imaginative genius specially displays itself.

But this is far from being his only excellence. In its range, in its directness, in its simple grace, in the ease with which it changes from lively dialogue to dramatic action, from simple pathos to passionate earnestness, in the subtle and delicate fancy which often suffuses its childlike words, in its playful humour, its bold character painting, in the even and balanced power which passes without effort from the Valley of the Shadow of Death to the land "where the shining ones commonly walked because 'it was on the borders of heaven," in its sunny kindness, unbroken by no bitter word, the "Pilgrim's Progress" is among the noblest of English poems. For if Puritanism had first discovered the poetry which contact with the spiritual world awakes in the meanest souls, Bunyan was the first of the Puritans who revealed this poetry to the outer world. The journey of Christian from the City of Destruction to the Heavenly City is simply a record of the life of such a Puritan as Bunyan himself, seen through an imaginative haze of spiritual idealism in which its commonest incidents are heightened and glorified. He is himself the Pilgrim who flies from the City of Destruction, who climbs the hill Difficulty, who faces Apollyon, who sees his loved ones cross the river of Death towards the Heavenly City, and how, because "the hill on which the City was framed was higher than the clouds, they therefore went up through the region of the air, sweetly talking as they went."

The popularity which the "Pilgrim's Progress" enjoyed from the first proves that the religious sympathies of the

English people were still mainly Puritan. Before Bunyan's death in 1688 ten editions of the book had already been sold, and though even Cowper hardly dared to quote it for fear of moving a sneer in the polite world of his day, its favour among the middle classes and the poor has grown steadily from its author's day to our own. It is probably the most popular and the most widely known of all English books.

IV.

PERSECUTION OF COVENANTERS.

SCOTT.

[In Scotland the struggle between the crown and the non-conformists took a more violent form. The great mass of the Scotch people had put away bishops and held to the government of the Church by Presbyters or parish ministers. They had embodied their belief in a National Covenant. Charles insisted on putting their Church under bishops, and on rejecting the Covenant. Many submitted; but among the more earnest religionists a stern resistance sprang up. They withdrew from the churches, and gathered in meetings or conventicles in the fields to worship God. From their fidelity to the Covenant they were called Covenanters. The Government hunted them down like wild beasts.]

WHEN the custom of holding field conventicles was adopted, it had the effect of raising the minds of those who frequented them to a higher and more exalted pitch of enthusiasm. The aged and more timid could hardly engage on distant expeditions into the wild mountainous districts and the barren moors; and the greater part of those who attended divine worship on such occasions were robust of

body, and bold of spirit, or at least men whose deficiency of strength and courage was more than supplied by religious zeal. The view of the rocks and hills around them, while a sight so unusual gave solemnity to their acts of devotion, encouraged them in the natural thought of defending themselves against oppression, amidst the fortresses of nature's own construction, to which they had repaired to worship the God of nature, according to the mode their education dictated and their conscience acknowledged. The recollection that in these fastnesses their fathers had often found a safe retreat from foreign invaders must have encouraged their natural confidence, and it was confirmed by the success with which a stand was sometimes made against small bodies of troops, who were occasionally repulsed by the sturdy Whigs¹ whom they attempted to disperse. In most cases of this kind they behaved with moderation, inflicting no further penalty upon such prisoners as might fall into their hands than detaining them to enjoy the benefit of a long sermon. Fanaticism added marvels to encourage this new-born spirit of resistance. They conceived themselves to be under the immediate protection of the Power whom they worshipped, and in their heated state of mind expected even miraculous interposition. At a conventicle held on one of the Lomond hills in Fife, it was reported and believed that an angelic form appeared in the air, hovering about the assembled congregation, with his foot advanced, as if in the act of keeping watch for their safety.

On the whole, the idea of repelling force by force, and defending themselves against the attacks of the soldiers, and others who assaulted them, when employed in divine worship, began to become more general among the harassed nonconformists. For this purpose many of the congregation assembled in arms, and I received the following

¹ *The Covenanters in the western counties were called Whigs.*

description of such a scene from a lady whose mother had repeatedly been present on such occasions. The meeting was held on the Eildon hills,² in the bosom betwixt two of the three conical tops which form the crest of the mountain. Trusty sentinels were placed on advanced posts all around, so as to command a view of the country below, and give the earliest notice of the approach of any unfriendly party. The clergyman occupied an elevated temporary pulpit, with his back to the wind. There were few or no males of any quality or distinction, for such persons could not escape detection, and were liable to ruin from the consequences. But many women of good condition, and holding the rank of ladies, ventured to attend the forbidden meeting, and were allowed to sit in front of the assembly. Their side-saddles were placed on the ground to serve for seats, and their horses were tethered, or piqueted, as it is called, in the rear of the congregation. Before the females, and in the interval which divided them from the tent, or temporary pulpit, the arms of the men present, pikes, swords, and muskets, were regularly piled in such order as is used by soldiers, so that each man might in an instant assume his own weapons.

As if Satan himself had suggested means of oppression, Lauderdale³ raked up out of oblivion the old and barbarous laws which had been adopted in the fiercest times, and directed them against the nonconformists, especially those who attended the field conventicles. One of those laws inflicted the highest penalties upon persons who were inter-communed, as it was called—that is, outlawed by legal sentence. The nearest relations were prohibited from assisting each other, the wife the husband, the brother the brother, and the parent the son, if the sufferers had been intercom-

² *Near Melrose.*

³ *The Duke of Lauderdale was the King's minister in Scotland.*

muned. The Government of this cruel time applied these ancient and barbarous statutes to the outlawed Presbyterians of the period, and thus drove them altogether from human society. In danger, want, and necessity, the inhabitants of the wilderness, and expelled from civil intercourse, it is no wonder that we find many of these wanderers avowing principles and doctrines hostile to the government which oppressed them, and carrying their resistance beyond the bounds of mere self-defence. There were instances, though less numerous than might have been expected, of their attacking the houses of the curates, or of others by whose information they had been accused of nonconformity; and several deaths ensued in those enterprises, as well as in skirmishes with the military.

Superstitious notions also, the natural consequences of an uncertain, melancholy, and solitary life among the desolate glens and mountains, mingled with the intense enthusiasm of this persecuted sect. Their occasional successes over their oppressors, and their frequent escapes from the pursuit of the soldiery, when the marksmen missed their aim, or when a sudden mist concealed the fugitives, were imputed, not to the operation of those natural causes by means of which the Deity is pleased to govern the world, and which are the engines of his power, but to the direct interposition of a miraculous agency, over-ruling and suspending the laws of nature, as in the period of Scripture history. Many of the preachers, led away by the strength of their devotional enthusiasm, conceived themselves to be the vehicles of prophecy, and poured out tremendous denunciations of future wars, and miseries more dreadful than those which they themselves sustained; and, as they imagined themselves to be occasionally under the miraculous protection of the heavenly powers, so they often thought themselves in a peculiar manner exposed to the envy and persecution of the

spirits of darkness, who lamed their horses when they were pursued, betrayed their footsteps to the enemy, or terrified them by ghastly apparitions in the dreary caverns and recesses where they were compelled to hide themselves. But especially the scattered Covenanters believed firmly that their chief persecutors received from the Evil Spirit a proof against leaden bullets—a charm, that is, to prevent their being pierced or wounded by them. There were many supposed to be gifted with this necromantic privilege. In the battle of Rullion Green, on the Pentland Hills, many of the Presbyterians were willing to believe that the balls were seen hopping like hailstones from Tom Dalziel's buff-coat and boots. Silver bullets were not supposed to be neutralized by the same spell; but that metal being scarce among the persecuted Covenanters, it did not afford them much relief.

To John Graham of Claverhouse, a Scottish officer of high rank, who began to distinguish himself as a severe executor of the orders of the Privy Council against non-conformists, the Evil Spirit was supposed to have been still more liberal than to Dalziel, or to the Englishman who died at Caldons. He not only obtained proof against lead, but the devil is said to have presented him with a black horse, which had not a single white hair upon its body. This horse, it was said, had been cut out of the belly of its dam, instead of being born in the usual manner. On this animal Claverhouse was supposed to perform the most unwonted feats of agility, flying almost like a bird along the sides of precipitous hills, and through pathless morasses, where an ordinary horse must have been smothered or dashed to pieces. It is even yet believed, that mounted on this steed, Claverhouse (or Clavers, as he is popularly called) once turned a hare on the mountain named the Brandlaw, at the head of Moffatdale, where no other horse could have kept its feet. But these exertions were usually made whilst he was in

pursuit of the Wanderers, which was considered as Satan's own peculiar pleasing work.

There lived at this gloomy period, at a place called Pres-hill, or Priesthill, in Lanarkshire, a man named John Brown, a carrier by profession, and called, from his zealous religious principles, the Christian Carrier. This person had been out with the insurgents at Bothwell Bridge,⁴ and was for other reasons amenable to the cruelty of the existing laws. On a morning of May, 1685, Peden, one of the Cameronian ministers, whom Brown had sheltered in his house, took his leave of his host and his wife, repeating twice,—“Poor woman! a fearful morning—a dark and misty morning!”—words which were afterwards believed to be prophetic of calamity. When Peden was gone, Brown left his house with a spade in his hand for his ordinary labour, when he was suddenly surrounded and arrested by a band of horse, with Claverhouse at their head. Although the prisoner had a hesitation in his speech on ordinary occasions, he answered the questions which were put to him in this extremity with such composure and firmness, that Claverhouse asked whether he was a preacher. He was answered in the negative. “If he has not preached,” said Claverhouse, “mickle⁵ hath he prayed in his time. But betake you now to your prayers for the last time” (addressing the sufferer), “for you shall presently die.” The poor man kneeled down and prayed with zeal; and when he was touching on the political state of the country, and praying that Heaven would spare a remnant, Claverhouse, interrupting him, said, “I gave you leave to pray, and you are preaching.” “Sir,” answered the prisoner, turning towards his judge on his knees, “you know nothing either of preaching or praying, if

⁴ *A battle fought between the Covenanters and the Duke of Monmouth, in which they were routed.*

⁵ *Much.*

you call what I now say preaching :”—then continued without confusion.

When his devotions were ended, Claverhouse commanded him to bid good-night to his wife and children. Brown turned towards them, and, taking his wife by the hand, told her that the hour was come which he had spoken of when he first asked her consent to marry him. The poor woman answered firmly,—“In this cause I am willing to resign you.” “Then have I nothing to do save to die,” he replied ; “and I thank God I have been in a frame to meet death for many years.” He was shot dead by a party of soldiers at the end of his own house ; and although his wife was of a nervous habit, and used to become sick at the sight of blood, she had on this occasion strength enough to support the dreadful scene without fainting or confusion, only her eyes dazzled when the carabines were fired. While her husband’s dead body lay stretched before him, Claverhouse asked her what she thought of her husband now. “I ever thought much of him,” she replied, “and now more than ever.” “It were but justice,” said Claverhouse, “to lay thee beside him.” “I doubt not,” she replied, “that if you were permitted, your cruelty would carry you that length. But how will you answer for this morning’s work ?” “To man I can be answerable,” said Claverhouse, “and Heaven I will take in my own hand.” He then mounted his horse and marched, and left her with the corpse of her husband lying beside her, and her fatherless infant in her arms. “She placed the child on the ground,” says the narrative with scriptural simplicity, “tied up the corpse’s head, and straightened the limbs, and covered him with her plaid, and sat down and wept over him.”

V.

THE POPIISH PLOT.

MACAULAY.

[While he was thus persecuting the dissenters from the National Church, the steady aim of Charles the Second was to set the crown free from all restraint of law or Parliament and to establish a despotism. This he hoped to do by the aid of France, and with this view he again and again betrayed the interests of England by secret treaties with the French king. Nor was he truer to the Church than to the nation. He was in heart a Catholic; and he looked forward to the ruin of Protestantism, because its spirit was averse from arbitrary power. He shrank indeed from avowing his faith; but his brother, James, Duke of York, and many of the leading statesmen and nobles of the time became Catholics. Meanwhile, suspicions of the king's dealings with France stole abroad; and in the general excitement men listened to the lies of Titus Oates, an impostor who pretended to have discovered a Popish plot for the destruction of the king and the nation. The country went mad with panic; and many foolish and cruel things were done.]

THE nation, awaking from its rapturous trance found itself sold to a foreign, a despotic, a Popish court, defeated on its own seas and rivers by a state¹ of far inferior resources, and placed under the rule of panders and buffoons. Our ancestors saw the best and ablest divines of the age turned out of their benefices by hundreds. They saw the prisons filled with men guilty of no other crime than that of worshipping God according to the fashion generally

¹ *The Dutch had defeated the English fleet, and sailed in triumph up the Thames.*

prevailing throughout Protestant Europe. They saw a Popish queen on the throne, and a Popish heir² on the steps of the throne. They saw unjust aggression followed by feeble war, and feeble war ending in disgraceful peace. They saw a Dutch fleet riding triumphant in the Thames. They saw the triple alliance³ broken, the Exchequer shut up,⁴ the public credit shaken, the arms of England employed, in shameful subordination to France, against a country⁵ which seemed to be the last asylum of civil and religious liberty. They saw Ireland discontented, and Scotland in rebellion. They saw, meantime, Whitehall swarming with sharpers and courtesans. They saw harlot after harlot, and bastard after bastard, not only raised to the highest honours of the peerage, but supplied out of the spoils of the honest, industrious, and ruined public creditor, with ample means of supporting the new dignity. The government became more odious every day. Even in the bosom of that very House of Commons which had been elected by the nation in the ecstasy of its penitence, of its joy and of its hope, an opposition sprang up and became powerful. Loyalty which had been proof against all the disasters of the civil war, which had survived the routs of Naseby and Worcester, which had never flinched from sequestration and exile, which the Protector could never intimidate or seduce, began to fail in this last and hardest trial. The storm had long been gathering. At length it burst with a fury which threatened the whole frame of society with dissolution.

It was natural that there should be a panic ; and it was natural that the people should, in a panic, be unreasonable and credulous. Oates was a bad man ; but the spies and

² *The King's brother James, Duke of York.* ³ *The alliance of England, Holland, and Sweden, against the aggression of France.*
⁴ *At the opening of the war with the Dutch.* ⁵ *Charles joined France in its attack upon Holland.*

deserters by whom governments are informed of conspiracies are generally bad men. His story was strange and romantic ; but it was not more strange or romantic than a well-authenticated Popish plot which some few people then living might remember, the gunpowder treason. Oates's account of the burning of London was in itself not more improbable than the project of blowing up King, Lords, and Commons, a project which had not only been entertained by very distinguished Catholics, but which had very narrowly missed of success. As to the design on the King's person, all the world knew that, within a century, two Kings of France and a prince of Orange had been murdered by Catholics, purely from religious enthusiasm, that Elizabeth had been in constant danger of a similar fate, and that such attempts, to say the least, had not been discouraged by the highest authority of the Church of Rome. The characters of some of the accused persons stood high ; but so did that of Anthony Babington,⁶ and that of Everard Digby.⁷ Those who suffered denied their guilt to the last ; but no persons versed in criminal proceedings would attach any importance to this circumstance. It was well known also that the most distinguished Catholic casuists had written largely in defence of regicide, of mental reservation, and of equivocation. It was not quite impossible that men whose minds had been nourished with the writings of such casuists might think themselves justified in denying a charge which, if acknowledged, would bring great scandal on the Church. The trials of the accused Catholics were exactly like all the state trials of those days ; that is to say, as infamous as they could be. They were neither fairer nor less fair than those of Algernon Sydney, of Rosewell, of Cornish, of all the unhappy men, in short, whom a predominant party

⁶ *Babington took part in a plot for murdering Queen Elizabeth.* ⁷ *Digby was one of the leaders in the Gunpowder Plot.*

brought to what was then facetiously called justice. Till the revolution purified our institutions and our manners, a state-trial was merely a murder preceded by the uttering of certain gibberish and the performance of certain mummeries.

The Opposition had now the great body of the nation with them. Thrice the King dissolved the Parliament; and thrice the constituent body sent him back representatives fully determined to keep strict watch on all his measures, and to exclude his brother from the throne. Had the character of Charles resembled that of his father, this intestine discord would infallibly have ended in civil war. Obstinacy and passion would have been his ruin. His levity and apathy were his security. He resembled one of those light Indian boats which are safe because they are pliant, which yield to the impact of every wave, and which therefore bound without danger through a surf in which a vessel ribbed with heart of oak would inevitably perish. The only thing about which his mind was unalterably made up was that, to use his own phrase, he would not go on his travels again for anybody or for anything. His easy, indolent behaviour produced all the effects of the most artful policy. He suffered things to take their course; and if Achitophel had been at one of his ears, and Machiavel at the other, they could have given him no better advice than to let things take their course. He gave way to the violence of the movement, and waited for the corresponding violence of the rebound. He exhibited himself to his subjects in the interesting character of an oppressed king, who was ready to do anything to please them, and who asked of them, in return, only some consideration for his conscientious scruples and for his feelings of natural affection, who was ready to accept any ministers, to grant any guarantees to public liberty, but who could not find it in his heart to take away his brother's birthright. Nothing more

was necessary. He had to deal with a people whose noble weakness it has always been not to press too hardly on the vanquished, with a people the lowest and most brutal of whom cry "shame," if they see a man struck when he is on the ground. The resentment which the nation had felt towards the court began to abate as soon as the court was manifestly unable to offer any resistance. The panic gradually subsided. Every day brought to light some new falsehood or contradiction in the stories of Oates and Bedloe. The people were glutted with the blood of Papists as they had, twenty years before, been glutted with the blood of regicides. When the first sufferers in the plot were brought to the bar, the witnesses to the defence were in danger of being torn in pieces by the mob. Judges, jurors, and spectators seemed equally indifferent to justice, and equally eager for revenge. Lord Stafford, the last sufferer, was pronounced not guilty by a large minority of his peers; and when he protested his innocence on the scaffold, the people cried out, "God bless you, my lord; we believe you, my lord." The attempt to make a son of Lucy Waters⁷ King of England was alike offensive to the pride of the nobles and to the moral feeling of the middle class. The old cavalier party, the great majority of the landed gentry, the clergy and the universities almost to a man, began to draw together, and to form in close array round the throne.

A similar reaction had begun to take place in favour of Charles the First during the second session of the Long Parliament; and, if that prince had been honest or sagacious enough to keep himself strictly within the limits of the law, we have not the smallest doubt that he would in a few months have found himself at least as powerful as

⁷ *A mistress of Charles, whose son, the Duke of Monmouth, some wished to make king in place of the Duke of York.*

his best friends, Lord Falkland, Culpepper, or Hyde, would have wished to see him. By illegally impeaching the leaders of the Opposition, and by making in person a wicked attempt on the House of Commons, he stopped and turned back that tide of loyal feeling which was just beginning to run strongly. The son, quite as little restrained by law or by honour as the father, was, luckily for himself, a man of a lounging, careless temper, and, from temper, we believe, rather than from policy, escaped that great error which cost his father so dear. Instead of trying to pluck the fruit before it was ripe, he lay still till it fell mellow into his very mouth. If he had arrested Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Russell⁸ in a manner not warranted by law, it is not improbable that he would have ended his life in exile. He took the sure course. He employed only his legal prerogatives, and he found them amply sufficient for his purpose.

The whole of that machinery which had lately been in motion against the Papists was now put in motion against the Whigs,⁹—brow-beating judges, packed juries, lying witnesses, clamorous spectators. The ablest chief of the party fled to a foreign country and died there.¹⁰ The most virtuous man¹¹ of the party was beheaded. Another of its most distinguished members preferred a voluntary death to the shame of a public execution. The boroughs on which the government could not depend were, by means of legal quibbles, deprived of their charters; and their constitution was remodelled in such a manner as almost to ensure the return of representatives devoted to the court. All parts of the kingdom emulously sent up the most extravagant assurances of the love which they bore to their sovereign, and

⁸ *The leaders of the party opposed to the court.* ⁹ *The party opposed to the court.* ¹⁰ *Lord Shaftesbury died in exile in Holland.* ¹¹ *Lord Russell.*

of the abhorrence with which they regarded those who questioned the divine origin or the boundless extent of his power.

VI.

THE TRIAL OF THE SEVEN BISHOPS.

MACKINTOSH.

[Charles had only begun to take advantage of the turn of national feeling which followed on the exposure of the Popish Plot when his death placed his brother, James the Second, on the throne. James was resolved to rule as a despot ; and this he might have succeeded in doing. But he was a bigoted Catholic, and resolved besides to make England a Catholic country. In his efforts to do this, he set against him all the classes who had hitherto supported the throne, and above all the clergy. They refused to read a Declaration of Indulgence which he illegally published ; and seven of the Bishops waited on the King himself with a protest. James treated this as a libel, and ordered them to be put on their trial.]

ON the 15th of June the Bishops were brought before the Court of King's Bench by a writ of Habeas Corpus. On leaving the Tower they refused to pay the fees required by Sir Edward Hales as lieutenant, whom they charged with discourtesy. He so far forgot himself as to say that the fees were a compensation for the irons with which he might have loaded them, and the bare walls and floor to which he might have confined their accommodation. They answered, " We lament the King's displeasure, but every other man loses his breath who attempts to intimidate us." On landing from their barge they were received with increased reverence by a great multitude, who made a lane for them, and followed them into Westminster Hall. The

nuncio,¹ unused to the slightest breath of popular feeling, was subdued by these manifestations of enthusiasm, which he relates with more warmth than any other contemporary. "Of the immense concourse of people," says he, "who received them on the bank of the river, the majority in their immediate neighbourhood were on their knees; the Archbishop² laid his hands on the heads of such as he could reach, exhorting them to continue steadfast in their faith; they cried aloud that all should kneel, while tears flowed from the eyes of many." In the Court of King's Bench they were attended by the twenty-nine peers, who offered to be their sureties, and the court was instantly filled by a crowd of gentlemen attached to their cause.

The Bishops pleaded Not Guilty, and they were enlarged, on their own undertaking to appear on the trial, which was appointed to be on the 29th of June. As they left the court they were surrounded by crowds, who begged their blessing. The Bishop of St. Asaph, detained in Palace Yard by a multitude, who kissed his hands and garments, was delivered from their importunate kindness by Lord Clarendon, who, taking him into his carriage, found it necessary to make a circuit through the Park to escape from the bodies of people by whom the streets were obstructed. Shouts and huzzas broke out in the court and were repeated all around at the moment of the enlargement. The bells of the Abbey Church of Westminster had begun to ring a joyful peal, when they were stopped by Sprat³ amidst the execrations of the people. No one knew, said the Dutch Minister, what to do for joy. When the Archbishop landed at Lambeth, the grenadiers of Lord Lichfield's regiment, though posted there by his enemies,

¹ James had, in defiance of the law, received a nuncio or ambassador from the Pope. ² Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury. ³ Bishop Sprat, Dean of Westminster.

received him with military honours, made a lane for his passage from the river to his palace, and fell on their knees to ask his blessing. In the evening the premature joy at this temporary liberation displayed itself in bonfires and in some outrages to Roman Catholics, as the supposed instigators of the prosecution.

[In spite of these displays of national feeling, James persisted in bringing the Bishops to trial, and at the end of June they were brought to the bar].

After a trial which lasted ten hours, the jury retired at seven o'clock in the evening to consider their verdict. The friends of the Bishops watched at the door of the jury-room, and heard loud voices at midnight and at three o'clock, so anxious were they about the issue, though delay be in such cases a sure symptom of acquittal. The opposition of one Arnold, the brewer of the King's house, being at length subdued by the steadiness of the others, they informed the Chief Justice, at six o'clock in the morning, that the jury were agreed in their verdict, and desired to know when he would receive it. The Court met at nine o'clock. The nobility and gentry covered the benches, and an immense concourse of people filled the hall, and blocked up the adjoining streets. Sir Robert Langley, the foreman of the jury, being, according to established form, asked whether the accused were guilty or not guilty, pronounced the verdict "Not guilty." No sooner were these words uttered than a loud huzza arose from the audience in the court. It was instantly echoed from without by a shout of joy, which sounded like a crack of the ancient and massy roof of Westminster Hall. It passed with electrical rapidity from voice to voice along the infinite multitude who waited in the streets. It reached the Temple in a few minutes. For a short time no man seemed to know where he was. No business was done for hours. The Solicitor-General informed

Lord Sunderland, in the presence of the nuncio, that never within the remembrance of man had there been heard such cries of applause mingled with tears of joy. "The acclamations," says Sir John Rerresby, "were a very rebellion in noise." In no long time they ran to the camp at Hounslow, and were repeated with an ominous voice by the soldiers in the hearing of the King, who, on being told that they were for the acquittal of the bishops, said, with an ambiguity probably arising from confusion, "So much the worse for them."

The jury were received with the loudest acclamations; hundreds with tears in their eyes embraced them as deliverers. The bishops, almost alarmed at their own success, escaped from the huzzas of the people as privately as possible, and exhorted them to fear God and honour the King. Cartwright,⁴ Bishop of Chester, had remained in court during the trial unnoticed by any of the crowd of nobility and gentry, and Sprat met with little more regard. Cartwright, in going to his carriage, was called "a wolf in sheep's clothing;" and as he was very corpulent, the populace cried out, "Room for the man with a pope in his belly!" They bestowed also on Sir William Williams⁵ very mortifying proofs of disrespect. Money was thrown among the populace to drink the healths of the King, the bishops, and the jury. In the evening they did so together with confusion to the Papists, amidst the ringing of bells, and around bonfires which were lighted throughout the city, blazing before the windows of the King's palace, where the Pope was burned in effigy by those who were not aware of his lukewarm friendship for their enemies. Bonfires were particularly kindled before the doors of the most distinguished Roman Catholics, who were required by the

⁴ *Bishop Cartwright and Sprat were on the King's side.*

⁵ *One of the counsel for the crown.*

multitude to defray the expense of this annoyance. Lord Arundel and others submitted. Lord Salisbury, with the zeal of a new convert, sent his servants to disperse the rabble ; but after having fired and killed the parish beadle, who came to quench the bonfire, they were driven back into the house. All parties, Dissenters as well as Churchmen, rejoiced in the acquittal ; the bishops and their friends vainly laboured to temper the extravagance with which it was expressed. The nuncio, at first touched by the effusion of popular feeling, but now shocked by this boisterous triumph, declared " that the fires over the whole city, the drinking in every street, accompanied by cries to the health of the bishops and confusion to the Catholics, with the play of fireworks and the discharge of firearms, and the other demonstrations of furious gladness, mixed with impious outrage against religion, which were continued during the night, formed a scene of unspeakable horror, displaying, in all its rancour, the malignity of this heretical people against the Church." The bonfires were kept up during the whole of Saturday, and the disorderly joys of the multitude did not cease till the dawn of Sunday reminded them of the duties of their religion.

VII.

THE LANDING OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

MACAULAY.

[England was at last driven to revolt by the tyranny of James ; and some of the greatest nobles called William, Prince of Orange, to put himself at the head of the national rising. William had married Mary, the eldest daughter of James, who had till of late been looked on as his destined successor. He gathered a fleet and army in

Holland, and in 1688 set sail for the English shores. His first attempt was foiled by a storm ; in a second he was more fortunate.]

IT was on the evening of Thursday the 1st of November that William put to sea the second time. The wind blew fresh from the east. The armament, during twelve hours, held a course towards the north-west. The light vessels sent out by the English Admiral,¹ for the purpose of obtaining intelligence, brought back news which confirmed the prevailing opinion that the enemy would try to land in Yorkshire. All at once, on a signal from the Prince's ship, the whole fleet tacked and made sail for the British Channel. The same breeze which favoured the voyage of the invaders prevented Dartmouth from coming out of the Thames. His ships were forced to strike yards and topmasts : and two of his frigates, which had gained the open sea, were shattered by the violence of the weather and driven back into the river.

The Dutch fleet ran fast before the gale, and reached the Straits at about ten in the morning of Saturday, the 3rd of November. William himself, in the Brill, led the way. More than six hundred vessels, with canvas spread to a favourable wind, followed in his train. The transports were in the centre. The men of war, more than fifty in number, formed an outer rampart. Herbert, with the title of Lieutenant Admiral General, commanded the whole fleet. Soon after midday William passed the Straits. His fleet spread to within a league of Dover on the north, and of Calais on the south. The men of war on the extreme right and left saluted both fortresses at once. The troops appeared under arms on the decks. The flourish of trumpets, the clash of cymbals, and the rolling of drums were distinctly heard at once on the English and French shores. An innumerable

¹ *The admiral of James the Second, Lord Dartmouth.*

company of gazers blackened the white beach of Kent. Another mighty multitude covered the coast of Picardy. Rapin de Thoyras, who, driven by persecution from his country, had taken service in the Dutch army, and now went with the Prince to England, described the spectacle, many years later, as the most magnificent and affecting that was ever seen by human eyes. At sunset the armament was off Beachy Head. Then the lights were kindled. The sea was in a blaze for many miles. But the eyes of all the steersmen were directed throughout the night to three huge lanterns which flamed on the stern of the Brill.

Meanwhile a courier had been riding post from Dover Castle to Whitehall with the news that the Dutch had passed the Straits and were steering westward. It was necessary to make an immediate change in all the military arrangements. Messengers were despatched in every direction. Officers were roused from their beds at dead of night. At three on the Sunday morning there was a great muster by torch-light in Hyde Park. The King had sent several regiments northward in the expectation that William would land in Yorkshire. Expresses were despatched to recall them. All the forces except those which were necessary to keep the peace of the capital were ordered to move to the west. Salisbury was appointed as the place of rendezvous; but, as it was thought possible that Portsmouth might be the first point of attack, three battalions of guards and a strong body of cavalry set out for that fortress. In a few hours it was known that Portsmouth was safe, and these troops then received orders to change their route and to hasten to Salisbury.

When Sunday the 4th of November dawned, the cliffs of the Isle of Wight were full in view of the Dutch armament. That day was the anniversary both of William's birth and of his marriage. Sail was slackened during part

of the morning; and divine service was performed on board of the ships. In the afternoon and through the night the fleet held on its course. Torbay was the place where the Prince intended to land. But the morning of Monday the 5th of November was hazy. The pilot of the Brill could not discern the sea marks, and carried the fleet too far to the west. The danger was great. To return in the face of the wind was impossible. Plymouth was the next port. But at Plymouth a garrison had been posted under the command of the Earl of Bath. The landing might be opposed; and a check might produce serious consequences. There could be little doubt, moreover, that by this time the royal fleet had got out of the Thames, and was hastening full sail down the Channel. Russell saw the whole extent of the peril, and exclaimed to Burnet,² "You may go to prayers, Doctor, all is over." At that moment the wind changed: a soft breeze sprang up from the south; the mist dispersed; the sun shone forth; and, under the mild light of an autumnal noon, the fleet turned back, passed round by the lofty cape of Berry Head, and rode safe in the harbour of Torbay.

Since William looked on that harbour its aspect has greatly changed. The amphitheatre which surrounds the spacious basin now exhibits everywhere the signs of prosperity and civilization. At the north-eastern extremity has sprung up a great watering-place,³ to which strangers are attracted from the most remote parts of our island by the Italian softness of the air, for in that climate the myrtle flourishes unsheltered, and even the winter is milder than the Northumbrian April. The inhabitants are about ten thousand in number. The newly-built churches and chapels, the baths and libraries, the hotels and public gardens, the infirmary and the museum, the white streets, rising terrace

² *An English chaplain of William.*

³ *Torquay.*

above terrace, the gay villas peeping from the midst of shrubberies and flower-beds, present a spectacle widely different from any that in the seventeenth century England could show. At the opposite end of the bay lies, sheltered by Berry Head, the stirring market-town of Brixham, the wealthiest seat of our fishing trade. A pier and a haven were formed there at the beginning of the present century, but have been found insufficient for the increasing traffic. The population is about six thousand souls. The shipping amounts to more than two hundred sail. The tonnage exceeds many times the tonnage of the port of Liverpool under the kings of the House of Stuart. But Torbay, when the Dutch fleet cast anchor there, was known only as a haven where ships sometimes took refuge from the tempests of the Atlantic. Its quiet shores were undisturbed by the bustle either of commerce or of pleasure : and the huts of ploughmen and fishermen were thinly scattered over what is now the site of crowded marts and of luxurious pavilions.

The peasantry of the coast of Devonshire remembered the name of Monmouth⁴ with affection, and held Popery in detestation. They therefore crowded down to the seaside with provisions and offers of service. The disembarkation instantly commenced. Sixty boats conveyed the troops to the coast. MacKay was sent on shore first with the British regiments. The Prince soon followed. He landed where the quay of Brixham now stands. The whole aspect of the place has been altered. Where we now see a port crowded with shipping, and a market-place swarming with buyers and sellers, the waves then broke on a desolate beach ; but a fragment of the rock on which the deliverer stepped from his boat has been carefully preserved, and is set up as an object of public veneration in the centre of that busy wharf.

⁴ *At the opening of James's reign the Duke of Monmouth had raised a revolt in the western counties.*

VIII.

KILLIECRANKIE.

SCOTT.

[In England William met with no opposition. The people rose against James, his own officers forsook him, and he fled over sea. In Scotland, however, the famous Claverhouse, who had now become Viscount Dundee, took refuge in the Highlands and called their clans to arms.]

DUNDEE resolved to preserve the castle of Blair, so important as a key to the Northern Highlands, and marched to protect it with a body of about two thousand Highlanders, with whom he occupied the upper and northern extremity of the pass between Dunkeld and Blair.

In this celebrated defile, called the Pass of Killiecrankie, the road runs for several miles along the banks of a furious river, called the Garry, which rages below, amongst cataracts and waterfalls which the eye can scarcely discern, while a series of precipices and wooded mountains rise on the other hand ; the road itself is the only mode of access through the glen, and along the valley which lies at its northern extremity. The path was then much more inaccessible than at the present day, as it ran close to the bed of the river, and was now narrower and more rudely formed.

A defile of such difficulty was capable of being defended to the last extremity by a small number against a considerable army ; and considering how well adapted his followers were for such mountain warfare, many of the Highland chiefs were of opinion that Dundee ought to content himself with guarding the pass against MacKay's¹ superior

¹ *The general of William's force in Scotland.*

army, until a rendezvous, which they had appointed, should assemble a stronger force of their countrymen. But Dundee was of a different opinion, and resolved to suffer MacKay to march through the pass without opposition, and then to fight him in the open valley, at the northern extremity. He chose this bold measure, both because it promised a decisive result to the combat which his ardent temper desired; and also because he preferred fighting MacKay before that General was joined by a considerable body of English horse who were expected, and of whom the Highlanders had at that time some dread.

On the 17th June, 1689, General MacKay with his troops entered the pass, which, to their astonishment, they found unoccupied by the enemy. His forces were partly English and Dutch regiments, who, with many of the Lowland Scots themselves, were struck with awe, and even fear, at finding themselves introduced by such a magnificent, and, at the same time, formidable avenue to the presence of their enemies, the inhabitants of these tremendous mountains, into whose recesses they were penetrating. But besides the effect produced on their minds by the magnificence of natural scenery, to which they were wholly unaccustomed, the consideration must have hung heavy on them, that if a General of Dundee's talents suffered them to march unopposed through a pass so difficult, it must be because he was conscious of possessing strength sufficient to attack and destroy them at the further extremity, when their only retreat would lie through the narrow and perilous path by which they were now advancing.

Mid-day was past ere MacKay's men were extricated from the defile, when their general drew them up in one line three deep, without any reserve, along the southern extremity of the narrow valley into which the pass opens. A hill on the north side of the valley, covered with dwarf

trees and bushes, formed the position of Dundee's army, which, divided into columns, formed by the different clans, was greatly outflanked by MacKay's troops.

The armies shouted when they came in sight of each other; but the enthusiasm of MacKay's soldiers being damped by the circumstances we have observed, their military shout made but a dull and sullen sound compared to the yell of the Highlanders, which rang far and shrill from all the hills around them. Sir Evan Cameron of Lochiel called on those around him to attend to this circumstance, saying, that in all his battles he observed victory had ever been on the side of those whose shout before joining seemed most sprightly and confident. It was accounted a less favourable augury by some of the old Highlanders that Dundee at this moment, to render his person less distinguishable, put on a sad-coloured buff-coat above the scarlet cassock and bright cuirass in which he had hitherto appeared.

It was some time ere Dundee had completed his preparations for the assault which he meditated, and only a few dropping shots were exchanged, while, in order to prevent the risk of being outflanked, he increased the intervals between the columns with which he designed to charge, insomuch that he had scarce men enough left in the centre. About an hour before sunset, he sent word to MacKay that he was about to attack him, and gave the signal to charge.

The Highlanders stript themselves to their shirts and doublets, threw away everything that could impede the fury of their onset, and then put themselves in motion, accompanying with a dreadful yell the discordant sound of their war-pipes. As they advanced, the clansmen fired their pieces, each column thus pouring in a well-aimed though irregular volley, then throwing down their fusees, without waiting to reload, they drew their swords, and increasing

their pace to the utmost speed, pierced through and broke the thin line which was opposed to them, and profited by their superior activity and the nature of their weapons to make a great havoc among the regular troops. When thus mingled with each other, hand to hand, the advantages of superior discipline on the part of the Lowland soldier were lost—agility and strength were on the side of the mountaineers. Some accounts of the battle give a terrific account of the blows struck by the Highlanders, which cleft heads down to the breast, cut steel headpieces asunder as night-caps, and slashed through pikes like willows. Two of MacKay's English regiments in the centre stood fast, the interval between the attacking columns being so great that none were placed opposite to them. The rest of King William's army were totally routed and driven headlong into the river.

Dundee himself, contrary to the advice of the Highland chiefs, was in front of the battle, and fatally conspicuous. By a desperate attack he possessed himself of MacKay's artillery, and then led his handful of cavalry, about fifty men, against two troops of horse, which fled without fighting. Observing the stand made by the two English regiments already mentioned, he galloped towards the clan of MacDonald, and was in the act of bringing them to the charge, with his right arm elevated, as if pointing the way to victory, when he was struck by a bullet beneath the armpit, where he was unprotected by his cuirass. He tried to ride on, but being unable to keep the saddle, fell mortally wounded, and died in the course of the night.

It was impossible for a victory to be more complete than that gained by the Highlanders at Killiecrankie. The cannon, baggage, the stores of MacKay's army, fell into their hands. The two regiments which kept their ground suffered so much in their attempt to retreat through the pass,

now occupied by the Athole-men, in their rear, that they might be considered as destroyed. Two thousand of MacKay's army were killed or taken, and the General himself escaped with difficulty to Stirling, at the head of a few horse. The Highlanders, whose dense columns, as they came down to the attack, underwent three successive volleys from MacKay's line, had eight hundred men slain.

But all other losses were unimportant compared to that of Dundee, with whom were forfeited all the fruits of that bloody victory. MacKay, when he found himself free from pursuit, declared his conviction that his opponent had fallen in the battle. And such was the opinion of Dundee's talents and courage, and the general sense of the peculiar crisis at which his death took place, that the common people of the low country cannot, even now, be persuaded that he died an ordinary death. They say, that a servant of his own, shocked at the severities which, if triumphant, his master was likely to accomplish against the Presbyterians, and giving way to the popular prejudice of his having a charm against the effect of lead balls, shot him, in the tumult of the battle, with a silver button taken from his livery coat. The Jacobites, and Episcopal party, on the other hand, lamented the deceased victor as the last of the Scots, the last of the Grahams, and the last of all that was great in his native country.

IX.

MASSACRE OF GLENCOE.

SCOTT.

[All resistance ceased with the death of Dundee, and the clans submitted to William. But the triumph of the Government was sullied by a terrible crime. One small clan, the MacDonalds of Glencoe, failed to give in their submission by the appointed day, and as they had long been hostile, the Secretary for Scotch Affairs, Dalrymple, resolved to take this opportunity of putting them to the sword. His plan was carried out with a treachery equal to its cruelty.]

THIS clan inhabited a valley formed by the river Coe, or Cona, which falls into Lochleven, not far from the head of Loch Etive. It is distinguished, even in that wild country, by the sublimity of the mountains, rocks, and precipices, in which it lies buried. The minds of men are formed by their habitations. The MacDonalds of the Glen were not very numerous, seldom mustering above two hundred armed men : but they were bold and daring to a proverb, confident in the strength of their country, and in the protection and support of their kindred tribes, the MacDonalds of Clanranald, Glengarry, Keppoch, Ardnamurchan, and others of that powerful name. They also lay near the possessions of the Campbells, to whom, owing to the predatory habits to which they were especially addicted, they were very bad neighbours, so that blood had at different times been spilt between them.

Before the end of January a party of the Earl of Argyle's regiment, commanded by Captain Campbell, of Glenlyon,

approached Glencoe. MacIan's¹ sons went out to meet them with a body of men, to demand whether they came as friends or foes. The officer replied that they came as friends, being sent to take up their quarters for a short time in Glencoe, in order to relieve the garrison of Fort William, which was crowded with soldiers. On this they were welcomed with all the hospitality which the chief and his followers had the means of extending to them, and they resided for fifteen days amongst the unsuspecting MacDonalds, in the exchange of every species of kindness and civility. That the laws of domestic affection might be violated at the same time with those of humanity and hospitality, you are to understand that Alister MacDonald, one of the sons of MacIan, was married to a niece of Glenlyon, who commanded the party of soldiers. It appears also that the intended cruelty was to be exercised upon defenceless men: for the MacDonalds, though afraid of no other ill-treatment from their military guests, had supposed it possible the soldiers might have a commission to disarm them, and therefore had sent their weapons to a distance, where they might be out of reach of seizure.

Glenlyon's party had remained in Glencoe for fourteen or fifteen days, when he received orders from his commanding officer, Major Duncanson, expressed in a manner which shows him to have been the worthy agent of the cruel Secretary.

This letter reached Glenlyon soon after it was written; and he lost no time in carrying the dreadful mandate into execution. In the interval, he did not abstain from any of those acts of familiarity which had lulled asleep the suspicions of his victims. He took his morning draught, as had been his practice every day since he came to the glen, at the house of Alister MacDonald, MacIan's second son, who

¹ *The chief of the clan.*

was married to his (Glenlyon's) niece. He, and two of his officers, named Lindsay, accepted an invitation to dinner from MacIan himself for the following day, on which they had determined he should never see the sun r.se. To complete the sum of treachery, Glenlyon played at cards in his own quarters with the sons of MacIan, John and Alister, both of whom were also destined for slaughter.

About four o'clock in the morning of the 13th of February the scene of blood began. A party, commanded by one of the Lindsays, came to MacIan's house and knocked for admittance, which was at once given. Lindsay, one of the expected guests at the family meal of the day, commanded this party, who instantly shot MacIan dead by his own bedside, as he was in the act of dressing himself, and giving orders for refreshments to be provided for his fatal visitors. His aged wife was stripped by the savage soldiery, who at the same time drew off the gold rings from her fingers with their teeth. She died the next day, distracted with grief, and the brutal treatment she had received. Several domestics and clansmen were killed at the same place.

The two sons of the aged chieftain had not been altogether so confident as their father respecting the peaceful and friendly purpose of their guests. They observed, on the evening preceding the massacre, that the sentinels were doubled and the mainguard strengthened. John, the elder brother, had even overheard the soldiers muttering among themselves that they cared not about fighting the men of the glen fairly, but did not like the nature of the service they were engaged in; while others consoled themselves with the military logic, that their officers must be answerable for the orders given, they having no choice save to obey them. Alarmed with what had been thus observed and heard, the young men hastened to Glenlyon's quarters, where they

found that officer and his men preparing their arms. On questioning him about these suspicious appearances, Glenlyon accounted for them by a story that he was bound on an expedition against some of Glengarry's men ; and alluding to the circumstance of their alliance, which made his own cruelty more detestable, he added, " If anything evil had been intended, would I not have told Alister and my niece ? "

Reassured by this communication, the young men retired to rest, but were speedily awakened by an old domestic, who called on the two brothers to rise and fly for their lives. " Is it time for you," he said, " to be sleeping, when your father is murdered on his own hearth ? " Thus roused, they hurried out in great terror, and heard throughout the glen, wherever there was a place of human habitation, the shouts of the murderers, the report of the muskets, the screams of the wounded, and the groans of the dying. By their perfect knowledge of the scarce accessible cliffs amongst which they dwelt, they were enabled to escape observation, and fled to the southern access of the glen.

Meantime the work of death proceeded with as little remorse as Stair himself could have desired. Even the slight mitigation of their orders respecting those above seventy years was disregarded by the soldiery in their indiscriminate thirst for blood, and several very aged and bed-ridden persons were slain amongst others. At the hamlet where Glenlyon had his own quarters, nine men, including his landlord, were bound and shot like felons ; and one of them, MacDonalld of Auchintriaten, had General Hill's passport in his pocket at the time. A fine lad of twenty had, by some glimpse of compassion on the part of the soldiers, been spared, when one Captain Drummond came up, and demanding why the orders were transgressed in that particular, caused him instantly to be put to death. A boy of five or six years old clung to Glenlyon's knees, entreating

for mercy, and offering to become his servant for life if he would spare him. Glenlyon was moved; but the same Drummond stabbed the child with his dirk, while he was in this agony of supplication.

At a place called Auchnaion one Barber, a sergeant, with a party of soldiers, fired on a group of nine MacDonalds, as they were assembled round their morning fire, and killed four of them. The owner of the house, a brother of the slain Auchintriaten, escaped unhurt, and expressed a wish to be put to death rather in the open air than within the house. "For your bread which I have eaten," answered Barber, "I will grant the request." MacDonald was dragged to the door accordingly; but he was an active man, and when the soldiers were presenting their firelocks to shoot him, he cast his plaid over their faces, and taking advantage of the confusion, broke from them, and escaped up the glen.

The alarm being now general, many other persons, male and female, attempted their escape in the same manner as the two sons of MacIan and the person last mentioned. Flying from their burning huts, and from their murderous visitors, the half-naked fugitives committed themselves to a winter morning of darkness, snow, and storm, amidst a wilderness the most savage in the West Highlands, having a bloody death behind them, and before them tempest, famine, and desolation. Bewildered in the snow-wreaths, several sunk to rise no more. But the severities of the storm were tender mercies compared to the cruelty of their persecutors. The great fall of snow, which proved fatal to several of the fugitives, was the means of saving the remnant that escaped. Major Duncanson, agreeably to the plan expressed in his orders to Glenlyon, had not failed to put himself in motion, with four hundred men, on the evening preceding the slaughter; and had he reached the eastern passes out of Glencoe by four in the morning as he

calculated, he must have intercepted and destroyed all those who took that only way of escape from Glenlyon and his followers. But as this reinforcement arrived so late as eleven in the forenoon, they found no MacDonalld alive in Glencoe, save an old man of eighty, whom they slew ; and after burning such houses as were yet unconsumed, they collected the property of the tribe, consisting of twelve hundred head of cattle and horses, besides goats and sheep, and drove them off to the garrison of Fort William.

Thus ended this horrible deed of massacre. The number of persons murdered was thirty-eight ; those who escaped might amount to a hundred and fifty males, who, with the women and children of the tribe, had to fly more than twelve miles through rocks and wildernesses, ere they could reach any place of safety or shelter.

X.

MARLBOROUGH AT BLENHEIM.

GREEN.

[The accession of William to the throne was followed by a great struggle with France, which was now striving to gain a supremacy over the whole of Europe. The war, which ended with the peace of Ryswick, was again reopened by an attempt to make the French virtually masters of Spain and its dominions ; and William, who was dying, begged his successor, Queen Anne, to entrust the English army to John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough. Churchill had been a finished and unscrupulous courtier under the Stuarts ; he now showed himself the greatest general England has ever produced.]

THE new general¹ hastened to the Hague, received the command of the Dutch as well as of the English forces,

¹ *Marlborough.*

and drew the German powers into the Confederacy with a skill and adroitness which even William² might have envied. Never was greatness more quickly recognised than in the case of Marlborough. In a few months he was regarded by all as the guiding spirit of the Alliance, and princes whose jealousy had worn out the patience of William yielded without a struggle to the counsels of his successor. The temper, indeed, of Marlborough fitted him in an especial way to be the head of a great confederacy. Like William he owed little of his power to any early training. The trace of his neglected education was seen to the last in his reluctance to write. "Of all things," he said to his wife, "I do not love writing." To pen a despatch indeed was a far greater trouble to him than to plan a campaign. But nature had given him qualities which in other men spring specially from culture. His capacity for business was immense. During the next ten years he assumed the general direction of the war in Flanders and in Spain. He managed every negotiation with the courts of the allies. He watched over the shifting phases of English politics. He had to cross the Channel to win over Anne to a change in the Cabinet, or to hurry to Berlin to secure the due contingent of Electoral troops from Brandenburg. At the same moment he was reconciling the Emperor with the Protestants of Hungary, stirring the Calvinists of the Cevennes into revolt, arranging the affairs of Portugal, and providing for the protection of the Duke of Savoy. But his air showed no trace of fatigue or haste or vexation. He retained to the last the indolent grace of his youth. His natural dignity was never ruffled by an outbreak of temper. Amidst the storm of battle men saw him, "without fear of danger or in the least hurry, giving his orders with all the calmness

² *William the Third.*

imaginable." In the cabinet he was as cool as on the battle-field. He met with the same equable serenity the pettiness of the German princes, the phlegm of the Dutch, the ignorant opposition of his officers, the libels of his political opponents. There was a touch of irony in the simple expedients by which he sometimes solved problems which had baffled Cabinets. The King of Prussia was one of the most vexatious among the allies, but all difficulty with him ceased when Marlborough rose at a state banquet and handed to him a napkin.

Churchill's composure rested partly indeed on a pride which could not stoop to bare the real self within to the eyes of meaner men. In the bitter moments before his fall he bade Godolphin burn some querulous letters which the persecution of his opponents had wrung from him. "My desire is that the world may continue in their error of thinking me a happy man, for I think it better to be envied than pitied." But in great measure it sprang from the purely intellectual temper of his mind. His passion for his wife was the one sentiment which tinged the colourless light in which his understanding moved. In all else he was without love or hate, he knew neither doubt nor regret. In private life he was a humane and compassionate man; but if his position required it he could betray Englishmen to death in his negotiations with St. Germain, or lead his army to a butchery such as that of Malplaquet. Of honour or the finer sentiments of mankind he knew nothing; and he turned without a shock from guiding Europe and winning great victories to heap up a matchless fortune by speculation and greed. He is perhaps the only instance of a man of real greatness who loved money for money's sake. The passions which stirred the men around him, whether noble or ignoble, were to him simply elements in an intellectual problem which had to be solved by

patience. "Patience will overcome all things," he writes again and again. "As I think most things are governed by destiny, having done all things we should submit with patience."

As a statesman the high qualities of Marlborough were owned by his bitterest foes. "Over the Confederacy," says Bolingbroke, "he, a new, a private man, acquired by merit and management a more decided influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain, had given to King William." But great as he was in the council, he was even greater in the field. He stands alone amongst the masters of the art of war as a captain whose victories began at an age when the work of most men is done. Though he served as a young officer under Turenne and for a few months in Ireland and the Netherlands, he had held no great command till he took the field in Flanders at the age of fifty-two. He stands alone, too, in his unbroken good fortune. Voltaire notes that he never besieged a fortress which he did not take, or fought a battle which he did not win. His difficulties came not from the enemy, but from the ignorance and timidity of his own allies. He was never defeated on the field; but victory after victory was snatched from him by the incapacity of his officers, or the stubbornness of the Dutch. In his second campaign of 1703, as in his earlier campaign of the preceding year, his hopes were foiled by the deputies of the State-General. Serene as his temper was, it broke down before their refusal to co-operate in an attack on Antwerp and French Flanders; and the prayers of Godolphin and of the pensionary Heinsius³ alone induced him to withdraw his offer of resignation. But in spite of victories on the Danube, the blunders of his adversaries on the Rhine, and the sudden aid of an insurrection which broke out in Hungary, the difficulties of Lewis⁴ were hourly increasing.

³ *The two leading ministers of England and Holland.*

⁴ *Lewis the Fourth*

The accession of Savoy to the Grand Alliance⁵ threatened his armies in Italy with destruction. That of Portugal gave the allies a base of operations against Spain. His energy however rose with the pressure, and while the Duke of Berwick, a natural son of James the Second, was despatched against Portugal, and three small armies closed round Savoy, the flower of the French troops joined the army of Bavaria on the Danube, for the bold plan of Lewis was to decide the fortunes of the war by a victory which would wrest peace from the Empire under the walls of Vienna.

The master-stroke of Lewis roused Marlborough at the opening of 1704 to a master-stroke in return; but the secrecy and boldness of the Duke's plans deceived both his enemies and his allies. The French army in Flanders saw in his march upon Maintz only a transfer of the war into Elsass. The Dutch were lured into suffering their troops to be drawn as far from Flanders as Coblenz by proposals of a campaign on the Moselle. It was only when Marlborough crossed the Neckar and struck through the heart of Germany for the Danube that the true aim of his operations was revealed. After struggling through the hill country of Würtemberg, he joined the Imperial army under the Prince of Baden, stormed the heights of Donauwörth, crossed the Danube and the Lech, and penetrated into the heart of Bavaria. The crisis drew the two armies which were facing one another on the Upper Rhine to the scene. The arrival of Marshal Tallard with thirty thousand French troops saved the Elector of Bavaria for the moment from the need of submission. But the junction of his opponent, Prince Eugene,⁶ with Marlborough, raised the contending forces again to an equality; and after a few marches the armies met on the north bank of the Danube near the little town of Hochstädt and the village

⁵ *The league of the states opposed to Lewis was called the Grand Alliance.*

⁶ *The commander of the Austrian army.*

of Blindheim or Blenheim, which have given their names to the battle.

In one respect the struggle which followed stands almost unrivalled in history, for the whole of the Teutonic race was represented in the strange medley of Englishmen, Dutchmen, Hanoverians, Danes, Würtembergers and Austrians who followed Marlborough and Eugene. The French and Bavarians who numbered, like their opponents, some fifty thousand men, lay behind a little stream which ran through swampy ground to the Danube. The position was a strong one, for the front was covered by the swamp, its right by the Danube, its left by the hill country in which the stream rose, and Tallard had not only entrenched himself, but was far superior to his rival in artillery. But for once Marlborough's hands were free. "I have great reason," he wrote calmly home, "to hope that everything will go well, for I have the pleasure to find all the officers willing to obey without knowing any other reason than that it is my desire, which is very different from what it was in Flanders, where I was obliged to have the consent of a council of war for everything I undertook." So formidable were the obstacles, however, that though the allies were in motion at sunrise on the 2nd of August, it was not till midday that Eugene, who commanded on the right, succeeded in crossing the stream. The English foot at once forded it on the left and attacked the village of Blindheim in which the bulk of the French infantry were entrenched, but after a furious struggle the attack was repulsed, while as gallant a resistance at the other end of the line held Eugene in check. The centre, however, which the French believed to be unassailable, had been chosen by Marlborough for the chief point of attack, and by making an artificial road across the morass he was at last enabled to throw his eight thousand horsemen on the French horse which lay covered

by it. Two desperate charges, which the Duke headed in person, decided the day. The French centre was flung back on the Danube and forced to surrender. Their left fell back in confusion on Hochstädt; their right, cooped up in Blindheim and cut off from retreat, became prisoners of war. Of the defeated army only twenty thousand escaped. Twelve thousand were slain, fourteen thousand were captured. Germany was finally freed from the French, and Marlborough, who followed the wreck of the French host in its flight to Elsass, soon made himself master of the Lower Moselle. But the loss of France could not be measured by men or fortresses. A hundred victories since Rocroi had taught the world to regard the French army as invincible, when Blenheim and the surrender of the flower of the French soldiery broke the spell. From that moment the terror of victory passed to the side of the allies, and "Malbrook" became a name of fear to every child in France.

XI.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

MACAULAY.

[The victories of Marlborough at last forced France to abandon her schemes of ambition; but an intrigue drove the great general from England till the death of Anne. Her successor, George the First, was an Elector of Hanover, descended, through his mother, from James the First, and the nearest Protestant heir to the crown. His throne, like that of his son, George the Second, was threatened by the Jacobites, or adherents of the exiled family of James the Second. The son and grandson of James, who were known as the Old and Young Pretenders, both made fruitless attempts to raise revolts against

the Hanoverian kings. What really secured the power of the Georges was the general content of the people with the good government of their great minister, Sir Robert Walpole.]

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE had, undoubtedly, great talents and great virtues. He was not indeed like the leaders of the party which opposed his government, a brilliant orator. He was not a profound scholar, like Carteret, or a wit and a fine gentleman like Chesterfield. In all these respects his deficiencies were remarkable. His literature consisted of a scrap or two of Horace and an anecdote or two from the end of the Dictionary. His knowledge of history was so limited that, in the great debate on the Excise Bill, he was forced to ask Attorney-General Yorke who Empson and Dudley¹ were. His manners were a little too coarse and boisterous even for that age of Westerns and Topehalls. When he ceased to talk of politics, he could talk of nothing but women; and he dilated on his favourite theme with a freedom which shocked even that plain-spoken generation, and which was quite unsuited to his age and station. The noisy revelry of his summer festivities at Houghton gave much scandal to grave people and annually drove his kinsman and colleague, Lord Townshend, from the neighbouring mansion of Rainham.

But however ignorant Walpole might be of general history and of general literature, he was better acquainted than any man of his day with what it concerned him most to know—mankind, the English nation, the court, the House of Commons, and the Treasury. Of foreign affairs he knew little; but his judgement was so good that his little knowledge went very far. He was an excellent parliamentary debater, an excellent parliamentary tactician, an excellent man of business. No man ever brought more industry or more

¹ *The extortionate ministers of Henry the Seventh.*

method to the transacting of affairs. No minister in his time did so much ; yet no minister had so much leisure.

He was a good-natured man, who had during thirty years seen nothing but the worst parts of human nature in other men. He was familiar with the malice of kind people, and the perfidy of honourable people. Proud men had licked the dust before him. Patriots² had begged him to come up to the price of their puffed and advertised integrity. He said after his fall that it was a dangerous thing to be a minister, that there were few minds which would not be injured by the constant spectacle of meanness and depravity. To his honour it must be confessed that few minds have come out of such a trial so little damaged in the most important parts. He retired, after more than twenty years of supreme power, with a temper not soured, with a heart not hardened, with simple tastes, with frank manners, and with a capacity for friendship. No stain of treachery, of ingratitude, or of cruelty rests on his memory. Factious hatred, while flinging on his name every other foul aspersion, was compelled to own that he was not a man of blood. This would scarcely seem a high eulogium on a statesman of our times. It was then a rare and honourable distinction. The contests of parties in England had long been carried on with a ferocity unworthy of a civilised people. Sir Robert Walpole was the minister who gave to our government that character of lenity which it has since generally preserved. It was perfectly known to him that many of his opponents had dealings with the Pretender. The lives of some were at his mercy. He wanted neither Whig nor Tory precedents for using his advantage unsparingly. But with a clemency to which posterity has never done justice, he suffered himself to be thwarted, vilified, and at last overthrown by a party which included many men whose necks were in his power.

² *The opponents of Walpole took the name of "patriots."*

That he practised corruption³ on a large scale is, we think indisputable. But whether he deserves all the invectives which have been uttered against him on that account may be questioned. The Parliament could not go on unless the Parliament could be kept in order. And how was the Parliament to be kept in order? Three hundred years ago it would have been enough for a statesman to have the support of the crown. It would now, we hope and believe, be enough for him to enjoy the confidence and approbation of the great body of the middle class. A hundred years ago it would not have been enough to have both crown and people on his side. The Parliament had shaken off the control of the royal prerogative. It had not yet fallen under the control of public opinion. A large proportion of the members had absolutely no motive to support any administration except their own interest, in the lowest sense of the word. Under these circumstances the country could be governed only by corruption. Bolingbroke, who was the ablest and most vehement of those who raised the clamour against corruption had no better remedy to propose than that the royal prerogative should be strengthened. The remedy would, no doubt, have been efficient. The only question is, whether it would not have been worse than the disease. The fault was in the constitution of the legislature; and to blame those ministers who managed the legislature in the only way in which it could be managed is gross injustice. They submitted to extortion because they could not help themselves. We might as well accuse the poor Lowland farmers who paid black mail to Rob Roy of corrupting the virtue of the Highlanders, as accuse Sir Robert Walpole of corrupting the virtue of Parliament. His crime was merely this, that he employed his money more dexterously, and got more support in return for it than any of

³ *Bribery of members of parliament.*

those who preceded or followed him. He was himself incorruptible by money. His dominant passion was the love of power; and the heaviest charge which can be brought against him is that to this passion he never scrupled to sacrifice the interests of his country.

One of the maxims, which, as his son tells us, he was most in the habit of repeating, was, *quieta non movere*.⁴ It was indeed the maxim by which he generally regulated his public conduct. It is the maxim of a man more solicitous to hold power long than to use it well. It is remarkable that, though he was at the head of affairs during more than twenty years, not one great measure, not one important change for the better or for the worse in any part of our institutions marks the period of his supremacy. Nor was this because he did not clearly see that many changes were very desirable. He had been brought up in the school of toleration, at the feet of Somers and of Burnet. He disliked the shameful laws against Dissenters. But he never could be induced to bring forward a proposition for repealing them. The sufferers represented to him the injustice with which they were treated, boasted of their firm attachment to the House of Brunswick⁵ and to the Whig party, and reminded him of his own repeated declaration of good will to their cause. He listened, assented, promised, and did nothing. At length the question was brought forward by others, and the minister after a hesitating and evasive speech voted against it. The truth was that he remembered to the latest day of his life that terrible explosion of high-church feeling which the foolish prosecution of a foolish parson had occasioned in the days of Queen Anne. If the Dissenters had been turbulent he would probably have relieved them: but while he apprehended no danger from them, he would not run the slightest risk for their sake.

⁴ "Let things alone." ⁵ *The line of the Hanoverian kings.*

He acted in the same manner with respect to other questions. He knew the state of the Scotch Highlands. He was constantly predicting another insurrection in that part of the empire. Yet, during his long tenure of power, he never attempted to perform what was then the most-obvious and pressing duty of a British statesman, to break the power of the chiefs, and to establish the authority of law through the furthest corners of the island. Nobody knew better than he that, if this were not done, great mischiefs would follow. He was content to meet daily emergencies by daily expedients; and he left the rest to his successors. They had to conquer the Highlands in the midst of a war with France and Spain, because he had not regulated the Highlands in a time of profound peace.

Sometimes, in spite of all his caution, he found that measures which he had hoped to carry through quietly had caused great agitation. When this was the case he generally modified or withdrew them. It was thus that he cancelled Wood's patent in compliance with the absurd outcry of the Irish. It was thus that he frittered away the Porteous Bill⁶ to nothing, for fear of exasperating the Scotch. It was thus that he abandoned the Excise Bill, as soon as he found that it was offensive to all the great towns of England. The language which he held about that measure in a subsequent session is strikingly characteristic. Pulteney had insinuated that the scheme would be again brought forward. "As to the wicked scheme," said Walpole, "as the gentleman is pleased to call it, which he would persuade gentlemen is not yet laid aside, I, for my part, assure this House I am not so mad as ever again to engage in anything that looks like an Excise; though in my private opinion, I still think

⁶ *A bill for inflicting on Edinburgh the punishment due to rioters who had murdered Captain Porteous in the streets.*

it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interest of the nation."

The conduct of Walpole with regard to the Spanish war⁷ is the great blemish of his public life. "Did the administration of Walpole," says his biographer, "present any uniform principle which may be traced in every part, and which gave combination and consistency to the whole? Yes, and that principle was THE LOVE OF PEACE." It would be difficult, we think, to bestow a higher eulogium on any statesman. But the eulogium is far too high for the merits of Walpole. The great ruling principle of his public conduct was indeed a love of peace, but not in the sense in which his biographer uses the phrase. The peace which Walpole sought was not the peace of the country, but the peace of his own administration. During the greater part of his public life, indeed, the two objects were inseparably connected. At length he was reduced to the necessity of choosing between them, of plunging the State into hostilities for which there was no just ground, and by which nothing was to be got, or of facing a violent opposition in the country, in Parliament, and even in the royal closet. No person was more thoroughly convinced than he of the absurdity of the cry against Spain. But his darling power was at stake, and his choice was soon made. He preferred an unjust war to a stormy session. It is impossible to say of a minister who acted thus that the love of peace was the one grand principle to which all his conduct is to be referred. The governing principle of his conduct was neither love of peace nor love of war, but love of power.

The praise to which he is fairly entitled is this, that he understood the true interest of his country better than any

⁷ *At the close of Walpole's rule ill-will sprang up between England and Spain; and Walpole, though conscious of the inexpediency of the war, yielded to the popular outcry.*

of his contemporaries, and that he pursued that interest whenever it was not incompatible with the interest of his own intense and grasping ambition.

XII.

BATTLE OF PRESTON PANS.

SCOTT.

[Under Walpole England gradually learned what freedom really meant. Men enjoyed personal as well as political liberty; justice was fairly administered; while the long peace enabled the country to develop new sources of commercial and industrial wealth. It was this that rendered it deaf to the call of the young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, when he landed in Scotland in 1745. Only the wild clans of the Highlands joined him. But their successes were at first amazing. The young Prince occupied Edinburgh, and boldly advanced on the royal force which lay at Preston Pans. In the early morning he determined to attack it by crossing a morass which protected its flank.]

THE whole of the Highland army got under arms, and moved forward with incredible silence and celerity by the path proposed. A point of precedence was now to be settled, characteristic of the Highlanders. The tribe of MacDonalds, though divided into various families, and serving under various chiefs, still reckoned on their common descent from the great Lords of the Isles, in virtue of which, they claimed, as the post of honour, the right of the whole Highland army in the day of action. This was disputed by some of the other clans, and it was agreed they should cast lots about this point of precedence. Fortune gave it to the Camerons and Stewarts, which was murmured at by the numerous Clan-Colla, the generic name for the MacDonalds.

The sagacity of Lochiel induced the other chiefs to resign for the day a point on which they were likely to be tenacious. The precedence was yielded to the MacDonalds accordingly, and the first line of the Highlanders moved off their ground by the left flank, in order that the favoured tribe might take the post of honour.

Anderson guided the first line. He found the pathway silent and deserted; it wined to the north-east, down a sort of holiow, which at length brought them to the eastern extremity of the plain, at the west end of which the regular army was stationed, with its left flank to the assailants. No guns had been placed to enfilade this important pass, though there was a deserted embrasure which showed that the measure had been in contemplation; neither was there a sentinel or patrol to observe the motions of the Highlanders in that direction. On reaching the firm ground, the column advanced due northward across the plain, in order to take ground for wheeling up and forming line of battle. The Prince marched at the head of the second column, and close in the rear of the first. The morass was now rendered difficult by the passage of so many men. Some of the Highlanders sunk knee-deep, and the Prince himself stumbled, and fell upon one knee. The morning was now dawning, but a thick frosty mist still hid the motions of the Highlanders. The sound of their march could, however, no longer be concealed, and an alarm-gun was fired as a signal for Cope's¹ army to get under arms.

Aware that the Highlanders had completely turned his left flank, and were now advancing from the eastward along a level and open plain, without interruption of any kind, Sir John Cope hastened to dispose his troops to receive them. Though probably somewhat surprised, the English general altered the disposition which he had made along the morass,

¹ *Sir John Cope commanded the royal army.*

and formed anew, having the walls of Preston-park, and that of Bankton, the seat of Colonel Gardiner, close in the rear of his army; his left flank extended towards the sea, his right rested upon the morass which had lately been in his front. His order of battle was now extended from north to south, having the east in front. In other respects the disposition was the same as already mentioned, his infantry forming his centre, and on each wing a regiment of horse. By some crowding in of the piquets, room enough was not left for Gardiner's corps to make a full front upon the right wing, so that one squadron was drawn up in the rear of the other. The artillery was also placed before this regiment, a disposition which the colonel is said to have remonstrated against, having too much reason to doubt the steadiness of the horses, as well as of the men who composed the corps. There was no attention paid to his remonstrances, nor was there time to change the disposition.

The Highlanders had no sooner advanced so far to the northward as to extricate the rear of the column from the passage across the morass, and place the whole on open ground, than they wheeled to the left, and formed a line of three men deep. This thin long line they quickly broke up into a number of small masses or phalanxes, each according to their peculiar tactics containing an individual clan, which disposed themselves for battle in the manner following. The best-born men of the tribe, who were also the best armed, and had almost all targets, threw themselves in front of the regiment. The followers closed on the rear, and forced the front forward by their weight. After a brief prayer, which was never omitted, the bonnets were pulled over the brows, the pipers blew the signal, and the line of clans rushed forward, each forming a separate wedge.

These preparations were made with such despatch on both wings, that the respective aides-de-camp of the Duke

of Perth and Lord George Murray² met in the centre, each bringing news that his general was ready to charge. The whole front line accordingly moved forward, and, as they did so, the sun broke out, and the mist rose from the ground like the curtain of a theatre. It showed to the Highlanders the line of regular troops drawn up in glittering array like a complete hedge of steel, and at the same time displayed to Cope's soldiers the furious torrent, which, subdivided into such a number of columns, or rather small masses, advanced with a cry which gradually swelled into a hideous yell, and became intermingled with an irregular but well-directed fire, the mountaineers presenting their pieces as they ran, dropping them when discharged, and rushing on to close conflict sword in hand. The events of the preceding night had created among the regulars an apprehension of their opponents, not usual to English soldiers. General Cope's tactics displayed a fear of the enemy rather than a desire to engage him : and now this dreaded foe, having selected his own point of advantage, was coming down on them in all his terrors, with a mode of attack unusually furious, and unknown to modern war.

There was but an instant to think of these things, for this was almost the moment of battle. But such thoughts were of a nature which produce their effect in an instant, and they added to the ferocity of the Highlanders, while they struck dismay into their opponents. The old seamen and gunners, who had been employed to serve the artillery on the right wing, showed the first symptoms of panic, and fled from the guns they had undertaken to work, carrying with them the priming flasks. Colonel Whitefoord, who had joined Cope's army as a volunteer, fired five of the guns on the advancing Highlanders, and, keeping his ground while all fled around him, was with difficulty saved from the

² *Two generals under Charles Edward.*

fury of the Camerons and Stewarts, who, running straight on the muzzles of the cannon, actually stormed the battery. The regiment of dragoons being drawn up, as has been said, in two lines, the foremost squadron, under Lieutenant-Colonel Whitney, having received orders to advance, were, like the gunners, seized with a panic, dispersed under the fire of the Highlanders, and went off without even an attempt to charge, riding down the artillery guard in their flight. The rearmost squadron, commanded by Gardiner, might, if steady, have yet altered the fate of the day, by charging the Highlanders when disordered with attacking the guns. Gardiner, accordingly, commanded them to advance and charge, encouraging them by his voice and example to rush upon the confused masses before them. But those to whom he spoke were themselves disordered at the rapid advance of the enemy, and disturbed by the waving of plaids, the brandishing and gleaming of broadswords and battle-axes, the rattle of the dropping fire, and the ferocious cry of the combatants. They made a feint to advance, in obedience to the word of command, but almost instantly halted, when first the rear-rank went off by four or five files at a time, and then the front dispersed in like manner; none maintaining their ground, except about a score of determined men, who were resolved to stand or fall with their commander.

On Cope's left, the cause of King George was not more prosperous. Hamilton's dragoons receiving a heavy rolling fire from the MacDonalds as they advanced, broke up in the same manner, and almost at the same moment, with Gardiner's, and scattering in every direction, left the field of blood, galloping some from the enemy, some, in the recklessness of their terror, past the enemy, and some almost through them. The dispersion was complete, and the disorder irretrievable. They fled west, east, and south,

and it was only the broad sea which prevented them from flying to the north also, and making every point of the compass witness to their rout.

Meantime, the infantry, though both their flanks were uncovered by the flight of the dragoons, received the centre of the Highland line with a steady and regular fire, which cost the insurgents several men,—among others, James MacGregor, a son of the famous Rob Roy, fell, having received five wounds, two of them from balls that pierced through his body. He commanded a company of the Duke of Perth's regiment, armed chiefly with the straightened scythes already mentioned, a weapon not unlike the old English bill. He was so little daunted by his wounds, as to raise himself on his elbow, calling to his men to advance bravely, and swearing he would see if any should misbehave.

In fact, the first line of the Highlanders were not an instant checked by the fire of the musketry; for, charging with all the energy of victory, they parried the bayonets of the soldiers with their targets, and the deep clumps, or masses, into which the clans were formed, penetrated and broke, in several points, the extended and thin lines of the regulars. At the same moment, Lochiel attacking the infantry on the left, and Clanranald on the right flank, both exposed by the flight of the dragoons, they were unavoidably and irretrievably routed. It was now perceived that Sir John Cope had committed an important error in drawing up his forces in front of a high park-wall, which barred their escape from their light-heeled enemies. Fortunately there had been breaches made in the wall, which permitted some few soldiers to escape; but most of them had the melancholy choice of death or submission. A few fought, and fell bravely. Colonel Gardiner was in the act of encouraging a small platoon of infantry, which continued firing, when he was cut down by a Highlander, with one of

those scythes which have been repeatedly mentioned. The greater part of the foot soldiers then laid down their arms, after a few minutes' resistance.

XIII.

WHITEFIELD AND WESLEY.

GREEN.

[His victory at Preston Pans encouraged Charles Edward to advance into England ; but no one joined him, and falling back on Scotland he was finally routed at Culloden. With his attempt ended all hope of overthrowing the Hanoverian throne by force of arms. Men began to forget Jacobitism in the larger interests of the time. Wealth grew fast, population increased, a new literature, sprang up, above all England was stirred by a new revival of religion.]

THE revival began in a small knot of Oxford students, whose revolt against the religious deadness of their times showed itself in ascetic observances, an enthusiastic devotion, and a methodical regularity of life which gained them the nickname of "Methodists." Three figures detached themselves from the group as soon as, on its transfer to London in 1738, it attracted public attention by the fervour and even extravagance of its piety; and each found his special work in the great task to which the instinct of the new movement led it from the first, that of carrying religion and morality to the vast masses of population which lay concentrated in the towns or around the mines and collieries of Cornwall and the north. Whitefield, a servitor of Pembroke College, was above all the preacher of the revival. Speech was governing English politics; and the religious power of speech was shown when a dread of "enthusiasm"

closed against the new apostles the pulpits of the Established Church, and forced them to preach in the fields. Their voice was soon heard in the wildest and most barbarous corners of the land, among the bleak moors of Northumberland, or in the dens of London, or in the long galleries where the Cornish miner hears in the pauses of his labour the sobbing of the sea. Whitefield's preaching was such as England had never heard before, theatrical, extravagant, often commonplace, but hushing all criticism by its intense reality, its earnestness of belief, its deep tremulous sympathy with the sin and sorrow of mankind. It was no common enthusiast who could wring gold from the close-fisted Franklin and admiration from the fastidious Horace Walpole, or who could look down from the top of a green knoll at Kingswood on twenty thousand colliers, grimy from the Bristol coal-pits, and see as he preached the tears "making white channels down their blackened cheeks."

On the rough and ignorant masses to whom they spoke the effect of Whitefield and his fellow Methodists was terrible both for good and ill. Their preaching stirred a passionate hatred in their opponents. Their lives were often in danger, they were mobbed, they were ducked, they were stoned, they were smothered with filth. But the enthusiasm they aroused was equally passionate. Women fell down in convulsions; strong men were smitten suddenly to the earth; the preacher was interrupted by bursts of hysteric laughter or of hysteric sobbing. All the phenomena of strong spiritual excitement, so familiar now, but at that time strange and unknown, followed on their sermons; and the terrible sense of a conviction of sin, a new dread of hell, a new hope of heaven, took forms at once grotesque and sublime. Charles Wesley, a Christ Church student, came to add sweetness to this sudden and startling light. He was the "sweet singer" of the movement. His hymns expressed

the fiery conviction of its converts in lines so chaste and beautiful that its more extravagant features disappeared. The wild throes of hysteric enthusiasm passed into a passion for hymn-singing, and a new musical impulse was aroused in the people which gradually changed the face of public devotion throughout England.

But it was his elder brother, John Wesley, who embodied in himself not this or that side of the vast movement, but the very movement itself. Even at Oxford, where he resided as a Fellow of Lincoln, he had been looked upon as head of the group of Methodists, and after his return from a quixotic mission to the Indians of Georgia he again took the lead of the little society, which had removed in the interval to London. In power as a preacher he stood next to Whitefield; as a hymn-writer he stood second to his brother Charles. But while combining in some degree the excellences of either, he possessed qualities in which both were utterly deficient; an indefatigable industry, a cool judgment, a command over others, a faculty of organization, a singular union of patience and moderation with an imperious ambition, which marked him as a ruler of men. He had, besides, a learning and skill in writing which no other of the Methodists possessed; he was older than any of his colleagues at the start of the movement, and he outlived them all. His life indeed from 1703 to 1791 almost covers the century, and the Methodist body had passed through every phase of its history before he sank into the grave at the age of eighty-eight.

It would have been impossible for Wesley to have wielded the power he did had he not shared the follies and extravagance as well as the enthusiasm of his disciples. Throughout his life his asceticism was that of a monk. At times he lived on bread only, and often slept on the bare boards. He lived in a world of wonders and

divine interpositions. It was a miracle if the rain stopped and allowed him to set forward on a journey. It was a judgment of Heaven if a hailstorm burst over a town which had been deaf to his preaching. One day, he tells us, when he was tired and his horse fell lame, "I thought—cannot God heal either man or beast by any means or without any?—immediately my headache ceased and my horse's lameness in the same instant." With a still more childish fanaticism he guided his conduct, whether in ordinary events or in the great crises of his life, by drawing lots or watching the particular texts at which his Bible opened. But with all this extravagance and superstition, Wesley's mind was essentially practical, orderly, and conservative. No man ever stood at the head of a great revolution whose temper was so anti-revolutionary. In his earlier days the bishops had been forced to rebuke him for the narrowness and intolerance of his churchmanship. When Whitefield began his sermons in the fields, Wesley "could not at first reconcile himself to that strange way." He condemned and fought against the admission of laymen as preachers till he found himself left with none but laymen to preach. To the last he clung passionately to the Church of England, and looked on the body he had formed as but a lay society in full communion with it. He broke with the Moravians, who had been the earliest friends of the new movement, when they endangered its safe conduct by their contempt of religious forms. He broke with Whitefield when the great preacher plunged into an extravagant Calvinism.

But the same practical temper of mind which led him to reject what was unmeasured, and to be the last to adopt what was new, enabled him at once to grasp and organize the novelties he adopted. He became himself the most unwearyed of field preachers, and his journal for half a century is little more than a record of fresh journeys

and fresh sermons. When once driven to employ lay helpers in his ministry he made their work a new and attractive feature in his system. His earlier asceticism only lingered in a dread of social enjoyments and an aversion from the gayer and sunnier side of life which links the Methodist movement with that of the Puritans. As the fervour of his superstition died down into the calm of age, his cool common sense discouraged in his followers the enthusiastic outbursts which marked the opening of the revival. His powers were bent to the building up of a great religious society which might give to the new enthusiasm a lasting and practical form. The Methodists were grouped into classes, gathered in love-feasts, purified by the expulsion of unworthy members, and furnished with an alternation of settled ministers and wandering preachers; while the whole body was placed under the absolute government of a Conference of ministers. But so long as he lived the direction of the new religious society remained with Wesley alone. "If by arbitrary power," he replied with a charming simplicity to objectors, "you mean a power which I exercise simply without any colleagues therein, this is certainly true, but I see no hurt in it."

XIV.

CLIVE AT ARCOT.

STANHOPE.

[While these peaceful changes were taking place in England itself, Englishmen across far-off seas were beginning to build up the great empire we now hold in India. English merchants had long settled on its coasts: their settlements grew into independent presidencies; and the limits of these widened as the traders profited by the quarrels of

the neighbouring princes. But this slow growth was changed into a vast scheme of conquest by the genius of Robert Clive.]

THE father of Clive was a gentleman of old family, but small estate, residing near Market-Drayton in Shropshire. There Robert, his eldest son, was born in 1725. From early childhood the boy showed a most daring and turbulent spirit. His uncle thus writes of him, even in his seventh year: "I hope I have made a little further conquest over Bob. . . . But his fighting, to which he is out of measure addicted, gives his temper so much fierceness and imperiousness that he flies out upon every trifling occasion; for this reason I do what I can to suppress the hero." The people at Drayton long remembered how they saw young Clive climb their lofty steeple, and seated astride a spout near the top,—how, on another occasion, he flung himself into the gutter to form a dam, and assist his playmates in flooding the cellar of a shopkeeper with whom he had quarrelled. At various schools to which he was afterwards sent he appears to have been idle and intractable. Even in after life he was never remarkable for scholarship; and his friendly biographer admits that, wide as was his influence over the native tribes of India, he was little, if at all, acquainted with their languages. His father was soon offended at his waywardness and neglect of his studies, and, instead of a profession at home, obtained for him a writership in the East India Company's¹ service, and in the Presidency of Madras. Some years later, when the old gentleman was informed of his son's successes and distinctions, he used to exclaim, half in anger and half in pride, "After all the booby has sense!"

The feelings of Clive during his first years at Madras are

¹ *The body of merchants who alone had the right to trade with India.*

described in his own letters. Thus he writes to his cousin : "I may safely say I have not enjoyed one happy day since I left my native country. I am not acquainted with any one family in the place, and have not assurance enough to introduce myself without being asked. . . . Letters to friends were surely first invented for the comfort of such solitary wretches as myself." There is no doubt that the climate at Madras was unfavourable to his health, and his duty at the desk ill-suited to his temper. But worse than any other discomfort was his own constitutional and morbid melancholy—a melancholy which may yet be traced in the expression of his portraits, and which, afterwards heightened as it was by bodily disease and mental irritation, closed the career of this great chief, by the act of his own hand, before he had attained the age of fifty years. As a writer at Madras he twice one day snapped a pistol at his own head. Finding it miss fire, he calmly waited until his room was entered by an acquaintance, whom he requested to fire the pistol out of the window. The gentleman did so, and the pistol went off. At this proof that it had been rightly loaded, Clive sprang up, with the exclamation, "Surely then I am reserved for something!" and relinquished his design.

From this time forward, however, the undaunted spirit of Clive found a nobler scope against the public enemy. During the petty hostilities between the English and French traders in India,—when the merchant's clerks were almost compelled in self-defence to turn soldiers,—the name of Ensign or Lieutenant Clive is often, and always honourably, mentioned; and during the intervals of these hostilities he returned to his ledgers and accounts. But on the emergency produced by the successes of Dupleix,² the siege of Trichinopoly,³ and the departure of Major

² *A Frenchman of genius who won the Indian provinces to his side, and resolved to drive the English from India.* ³ Chunda

Lawrence, he accepted a captain's commission, and bade adieu to trade. With no military education, with so little military experience, this young man of twenty-five shone forth, not only, as might have been foreseen,—a most courageous, but a most skilful and accomplished commander;—a commander, as Lord Chatham once exclaimed, “whose resolution would charm the King of Prussia, and whose presence of mind has astonished the Indies.” At this crisis he discerned that, although it was not possible to afford relief to Trichinopoly, a diversion might still be effected by a well-timed surprise of Arcot, thus compelling Chunda Sahib to send a large detachment from his army. The heads of the Presidency, on whom he strenuously urged his views, not only approved the design, but accepted the offer of his own services for its execution. Accordingly, in August, 1751, Captain Clive marched from Madras at the head of only 300 Sepoys⁴ and 200 Europeans. Scanty as seems this force, it could only be formed by reducing the garrison at Fort St. David to 100 and the garrison of Madras to 50 men; and of the eight officers under Clive, six had never before been in action, and four were merchants' clerks, who, incited by his example, took up the sword to follow him.

A few days' march brought the little band within ten miles of Arcot, and within sight of the outposts of the garrison. There a violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain arose, through which, however, Clive undauntedly pushed forward. Slight as seems this incident, it became attended with important results, for the garrison, apprised by their outposts of the behaviour of the English, were seized with a superstitious panic, as though their opponents

Sahib, a prince in alliance with the French, had attacked Trichinopoly, whose ruler was on the side of the English.

⁴ *Native troops.*

were in league with the Heavens, and they fled precipitately, not only from the city, but from the citadel. Thus Clive, without having struck a blow, marched through the streets amidst a concourse of a hundred thousand spectators, and took quiet possession of the citadel or fort. In that stronghold the Arcot merchants had for security deposited effects to the value of 50,000*l.*, which Clive punctually restored to the owners; and this politic act of honesty conciliated many of the principal inhabitants to the English interest.

Clive, learning that the fugitive garrison had been reinforced, and had taken post in the neighbourhood, made several sallies against them; in the last he surprised them at night, and scattered or put them to the sword. But his principal business was to prepare against the siege which he expected, by collecting provisions and strengthening the works of the fort. As he had foretold, his appearance at Arcot effected a diversion at Trichinopoly. Chunda Sahib immediately detached 4,000 men from his army, who were joined by 2,000 natives from Vellore, by 150 Europeans from Pondicherry,⁵ and by the remains of the fugitive garrison. Altogether, the force thus directed against Arcot exceeded 10,000 men, and was commanded by Rajah Sahib, a son of Chunda Sahib. The fort in which the English were now besieged was, notwithstanding some hasty repairs, in great measure ruinous, with the parapet low and slightly built, with several of the towers decayed, with the ditch in some parts fordable, in others dry, and in some choked up with fallen rubbish. But Clive undauntedly maintained, day after day, such feeble bulwarks against such overwhelming numbers.

After several weeks' siege, however, the besiegers, scanty and ill-served as was their artillery, had succeeded in making

⁵ *The chief French settlement in India.*

more than one practicable breach in the walls. Some succour to the garrison was attempted from Madras, but in vain. Another resource, however, remained to Clive. He found means to despatch a messenger through the enemy's lines to Morari Row, a Mahratta chieftain, who had received a subsidy to assist Mahomed Ali, and who lay encamped with 6,000 men on the hills of Mysore. Hitherto, notwithstanding his subsidy, he had kept aloof from the contest. But the news how bravely Arcot was defended fixed his wavering mind. "I never thought till now," said he, "that the English could fight. Since they can I will help them." And accordingly he sent down a detachment of his troops from the hills.

Rajah Sahib, when he learnt that the Mahrattas were approaching, perceived that he had no time to lose. He sent a flag of truce to the garrison, promising a large sum of money if Clive would surrender, and denouncing instant death if Clive awaited a storm; but he found his offers and his threats received with equal disdain. Exasperated at the scornful answer, he made every preparation for a desperate attack on the morrow. It was the 14th of November, the fiftieth day of the siege, and the anniversary of the festival in commemoration of that martyr of early Islam, Hosein, when according to the creed of the Mahometans of India, any one who falls in battle against unbelievers is wafted at once into the highest region of Paradise. But, not solely trusting to the enthusiasm of the day, Rajah Sahib had recourse, moreover, to the excitement of bang, an intoxicating drug, with which he plentifully supplied his soldiers. Before day-break they came on every side rushing furiously up to the assault. Besides the breaches which they expected to storm, they had hopes to break open the gates by urging forwards several elephants with plates of iron fixed to their foreheads; but the huge animals, galled by the English musketry

as of yore by the Roman javelins, soon turned, and trampled down the multitudes around them. Opposite one of the breaches where the water of the ditch was deepest another party of the enemy had launched a raft with seventy men upon it, and began to cross. In this emergency Clive, observing that his gunners fired with bad aim, took himself the management of one of the field-pieces with so much effect that in three or four discharges he had upset the raft and drowned the men. Throughout the day his valour and his skill were equally conspicuous, and every assault of his opponents was repulsed with heavy loss. In the first part of the night their fire was renewed, but at two in the morning it ceased, and at the return of daylight it appeared that they had raised the siege, and were already out of sight, leaving 400 men dead upon the ground, with all their ammunition and artillery.

XV.

WOLFE AT QUEBEC.

BANCROFT.

[While England was thus wresting the supremacy over India from the French, she was struggling with them across the Atlantic for the possession of America. English colonies had grown up since Elizabeth's day along its eastern coast, and were fast becoming powerful and populous states. But France had seized the line of the St. Lawrence, and pushed her settlements along the great lakes and the Mississippi to the sea. She thus threatened to cut off the British colonies from the great western plains, and to prison them to the eastern coast. The war which broke out between France and England was thus a contest which settled the future of America. Its issue decided that Englishmen and not Frenchmen were

to colonize and rule the great continent of the west. The struggle turned on the possession of Canada and its capital, Quebec. General Wolfe sailed up the St. Lawrence to besiege the town ; but he was long unable to force a landing, and the army was almost in despair when he won the victory of Quebec.]

SUMMER, which in that climate hurries through the sky, was over, and the British fleet must soon withdraw from the river. "My constitution," wrote the General¹ to Holderness, on the 9th, just four days before his death, "is entirely ruined, without the consolation of having done any considerable service to the state, and without any prospect of it."

But, in the meantime, Wolfe applied himself intently to reconnoitring the north shore above Quebec. Nature had given him good eyes, as well as a warmth of temper to follow first impressions. He himself discovered the cove which now bears his name, where the bending promontories almost form a basin, with a very narrow margin, over which the hill rises precipitously. He saw the path that wound up the steep, though so narrow that two men could hardly march in it abreast ; and he knew, by the number of tents which he counted on the summit, that the Canadian post which guarded it could not exceed a hundred. Here he resolved to land his army by surprise. To mislead the enemy, his troops were kept far above the town ; while Saunders, as if an attack was intended at Beauport, set Cook, the great mariner, with others, to sound the water and plant buoys along that shore.

The day and night of the twelfth were employed in preparations. The autumn evening was bright ; and the General, under the clear starlight, visited his stations, to make his final inspection and utter his last words of encouragement. As he passed from ship to ship, he spoke to

¹ *Wolfe.*

those in the boat with him of the poet Gray, and the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." "I," said he, "would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow:" and, while the oars struck the river as it rippled in the silence of the night air under the flowing tide, he repeated:—

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Every officer knew his appointed duty, when, at one o'clock in the morning of the 13th of September, Wolfe, Monckton, and Murray, and about half the forces, set off in boats, and, using neither sail nor oars, glided down with the tide. In three quarters of an hour the ships followed; and, though the night had become dark, aided by the rapid current, they reached the cove just in time to cover the landing. Wolfe and the troops with him leaped on shore; the light infantry, who found themselves borne by the current a little below the intrenched path, clambered up the steep hill, staying themselves by the roots and boughs of the maple and spruce and ash trees that covered the precipitous declivity, and, after a little firing, dispersed the picket which guarded the height; the rest ascended safely by the pathway. A battery of four guns on the left was abandoned to Colonel Howe. When Townshend's division disembarked, the English had already gained one of the roads to Quebec; and, advancing in front of the forest, Wolfe stood at day-break with his invincible battalions on the Plains of Abraham, the battle-field of the Celtic and Saxon² races.

"It can be but a small party, come to burn a few houses and retire," said Montcalm,³ in amazement, as the news

² i.e. *the French and English.*

³ *The French general.*

reached him in his intrenchments on the other side of the St. Charles ; but, obtaining better information, "Then," he cried, "they have at last got to the weak side of this miserable garrison ; we must give battle and crush them before mid-day." And, before ten, the two armies, equal in numbers, each being composed of less than five thousand men, were ranged in presence of one another for battle. The English, not easily accessible from intervening shallow ravines and rail-fences, were all regulars, perfect in discipline, terrible in their fearless enthusiasm, thrilling with pride at their morning's success, commanded by a man whom they obeyed with confidence and love. The doomed and devoted Montcalm had what Wolfe had called but "five weak French battalions," of less than two thousand men, "mingled with disorderly peasantry," formed on commanding ground. The French had three little pieces of artillery ; the English one or two. The two armies cannonaded each other for nearly an hour ; when Montcalm, having summoned De Bougainville to his aid, and despatched messenger after messenger for De Vaudreuil, who had fifteen hundred men at the camp, to come up before he should be driven from the ground, endeavoured to flank the British and crowd them down the high bank of the river. Wolfe counteracted the movement by detaching Townsend with Amherst's regiment, and afterwards a part of the royal Americans, who formed on the left with a double front.

Waiting no longer for more troops, Montcalm led the French army impetuously to the attack. The ill-disciplined companies broke by their precipitation and the unevenness of the ground ; and fired by platoons, without unity. Their adversaries, especially the forty-third and the forty-seventh, where Monckton stood, of which three men out of four were Americans, received the shock with calmness ; and after having, at Wolfe's command, reserved their fire till their

enemy was within forty yards, their line began a regular, rapid, and exact discharge of musketry. Montcalm was present everywhere, braving danger, wounded, but cheering by his example. The second in command, De Sennezeagues, an associate in glory at Ticonderoga, was killed. The brave but untried Canadians, flinching from a hot fire in the open field, began to waver; and, so soon as Wolfe, placing himself at the head of the twenty-eighth and the Louisburg grenadiers, charged with bayonets, they everywhere gave way. Of the English officers, Carleton was wounded; Barré, who fought near Wolfe, received in the head a ball which made him blind of one eye, and ultimately of both. Wolfe, also, as he led the charge, was wounded in the wrist; but, still pressing forward, he received a second ball; and, having decided the day, was struck a third time, and mortally, in the breast. "Support me," he cried to an officer near him; "let not my brave fellows see me drop." He was carried to the rear, and they brought him water to quench his thirst. "They run! they run!" spoke the officer on whom he leaned. "Who run?" asked Wolfe, as his life was fast ebbing. "The French," replied the officer, "give way everywhere." "What," cried the expiring hero, "do they run already? Go, one of you, to Colonel Burton; bid him march Webb's regiment with all speed to Charles River to cut off the fugitives." Four days before, he had looked forward to early death with dismay. "Now, God be praised, I die happy." These were his words as his spirit escaped in the blaze of his glory. Night, silence, the rushing tide, veteran discipline, the sure inspiration of genius, had been his allies; his battle-field, high over the ocean river, was the grandest theatre for illustrious deeds; his victory, one of the most momentous in the annals of mankind, gave to the English tongue and the institutions of the Germanic race the unexplored and seemingly infinite west

and north. He crowded into a few hours actions that would have given lustre to length of life ; and, filling his day with greatness, completed it before its noon.

XVI.

BUNKER'S HILL.

BANCROFT.

[The victory was followed by a peace, in which France withdrew from every part of America save the mouth of the Mississippi, and the great continent was left to the possession of Englishmen. But the triumph was soon followed by a terrible struggle. The English colonies felt that the time was come when they could govern themselves ; while England unwisely resolved to hold them under her rule. War broke out ; and the British soldiers at first made light of the untrained volunteers from the colonies. But the Americans soon showed that they too were of English blood and English courage ; and, advancing to besiege Boston, they encountered a sally of the British army from that town on the heights of Bunker's Hill. They succeeded in repulsing it ; and from that moment it became impossible to conquer America.]

Of the two columns which were put in motion,¹ the one was led by Pigot against the redoubt ; the other by Howe himself² against the flank, which seemed protected by nothing but a fence of rails and hay easy to be scrambled over, when the left of Prescott³ would be turned, and he would be forced to surrender on finding the enemy in his rear.

¹ *The British columns, who were attacking the entrenchments of the colonists on Bunker's Hill.* ² *General Howe commanded the British forces.* ³ *The commander of the Americans on Bunker's Hill.*

As they began to march, the dazzling lustre of a summer's sun was reflected from their burnished armour ; the battery on Copp's Hill, from which Clinton and Burgoyne ⁴ were watching every movement, kept up an incessant fire, which was seconded by the *Falcon* and the *Lively*, the *Somerset*, and the two floating batteries ; the town of Charlestown, consisting of five hundred edifices of wood, burst into a blaze ; and the steeple of its only church became a pyramid of fire. All the while the masts of the shipping, and the heights of the British camp, the church towers, the house-tops of a populous town,⁵ and the acclivities of the surrounding country were crowded with spectators, to watch the battle which was to take place, in full sight on a conspicuous eminence ; and which, as the English thought, was to assure the integrity of the British empire ; as the Americans believed, was to influence the freedom and happiness of mankind.

As soon as Prescott perceived that the enemy were in motion, he commanded Robinson, his Lieutenant-Colonel, the same who conducted himself so bravely in the fight at Concord, and Henry Woods, his Major, famed in the villages of Middlesex for ability and patriotism, with separate detachments to flank the enemy ; and they executed his orders with prudence and daring. He then went through the works to encourage and animate his inexperienced soldiers. "The red-coats will never reach the redoubt," such were his words, as he himself used to narrate them, "if you will but withhold your fire till I give the order, and be careful not to shoot over their heads." After this round, he took his post in the redoubt, well satisfied that the men would do their duty.

The British advanced in line in good order, steadily and slowly, and with a confident, imposing air, pausing on the

⁴ *Two English Generals.*

⁵ *Boston.*

march to let their artillery prepare the way, and firing with muskets as they advanced. But they fired too soon and too high, doing but little injury.

Incumbered with their knapsacks, they ascended the steep hill with difficulty, covered as it was with grass reaching to their knees, and intersected with walls and fences. Prescott waited till the enemy had approached within eight rods as he afterwards thought, within ten or twelve rods as the committee of safety of Massachusetts wrote, when he gave the word "Fire!" At once, from the redoubt and breastwork, every gun was discharged. Nearly the whole front rank of the enemy fell, and the rest, to whom this determined resistance was unexpected, were brought to a stand. For a few minutes, fifteen or ten,—who can count such minutes!—each one of the Americans, completely covered whilst he loaded his musket, exposed only while he stood upon the wooden platform or steps of earth in the redoubt to take aim, fought according to his own judgment and will; and a close and unremitting fire was continued and returned, till the British staggered, wavered, and then in disordered masses retreated precipitately to the foot of the hill, and some even to their boats.

The column of the enemy, which advanced near the *Mystic* under the lead of Howe, moved gallantly forward against the rail-fence, and, when within eighty or one hundred yards, displayed into line with the precision of troops on parade. Here, too, the Americans, commanded by Stark and Knowlton, cheered on by Putnam, who like Prescott bade them reserve their fire, restrained themselves as if by universal consent, till at the proper moment, resting their guns on the rails of the fence, they poured forth a deliberate, well-directed, fatal discharge; here, too, the British recoiled from the volley, and after a short contest

were thrown into confusion, sounded a retreat, and fell back till they were covered by the ground.

Then followed moments of joy in that unfinished redoubt, and behind the grassy rampart, where New England husbandmen, so often taunted with cowardice, beheld veteran battalions shrink before their arms. Their hearts bounded as they congratulated each other. The night-watches, thirst, hunger, danger, whether of captivity or death, were forgotten. They promised themselves victory.

As the British soldiers retreated, the officers were seen by the spectators on the opposite shore, running down to them, using passionate gestures, and pushing them forward with their swords. After an interval of about fifteen minutes, during which Prescott moved round among his men, encouraging them and cheering them with praise, the British column under Pigot rallied and advanced, though with apparent reluctance, in the same order as before, firing as they approached within musket-shot. This time the Americans withheld their fire till the enemy were within six or five rods of the redoubt, when, as the order was given, it seemed more fatal than before. The enemy continued to discharge their guns, and pressed forward with spirit. "But from the whole American line there was," said Prescott, "a continuous stream of fire;" and though the British officers exposed themselves fearlessly, remonstrating, threatening, and even striking the soldiers to urge them on, they could not reach the redoubt, but in a few moments gave way in greater disorder than before. The wounded and the dead covered the ground in front of the works, some lying within a few yards of them.

On the flank also, the British light infantry again marched up its companies against the grass fence, but could not penetrate it. "Indeed," wrote some of the survivors, "how could we penetrate it? Most of our grenadiers and light

infantry, the moment of presenting themselves, lost three-fourths, and many nine-tenths of their men. Some had only eight or nine men in a company left, some only three, four, or five." On the ground where but the day before the mowers had swung the scythe in peace, "the dead," relates Stark, "lay as thick as sheep in a fold." Howe for a few seconds was left nearly alone, so many of the officers about him having been killed or wounded; and it required the utmost exertion of all, from the generals down to the subalterns, to repair the rout. Rails which the British had clambered over were found the next day studded with marks of musket-balls not a hand's-breadth apart; and officers, who had served in the most remarkable actions of the last war, declared that for the time it lasted it was the hottest engagement they ever knew.

At intervals, the artillery from the ships and batteries was playing, while the flames were rising over the town of Charlestown, and laying waste the places of the graves of its fathers, and streets were falling together, and ships at the yards were crashing on the stocks, and the kindred of the Americans, from the fields and hills and house-tops around, watched every gallant act of their defenders.

XVII

WATT.

S M I L E S.

The colonies at last succeeded in forcing England to recognise their independence, and became the United States of America. Terrible as the struggle had been, England had been growing richer and greater during its course, through the vast developement of her industries. This was owing partly to the improvement of her roads

and the introduction of canals, but mainly to the discovery of the steam-engine by Watt. Watt was a mechanician of Glasgow, whose inventive faculty turned itself to improve the rude machines in which steam had till now been used as a motive power. He was long foiled in his efforts.]

WATT continued to pursue his studies as before. Though still occupied with his inquiries and experiments as to steam, he did not neglect his proper business, but was constantly on the look-out for improvements in instrument-making. A machine which he invented for drawing in perspective proved a success; and he made a considerable number of them to order, for customers in London as well as abroad. He was also an indefatigable reader, and continued to extend his knowledge of chemistry and mechanics by perusal of the best books on these sciences.

Above all other subjects, however, the improvement of the steam-engine continued to keep the fastest hold upon his mind. He still brooded over his experiments with the Newcomen model,¹ but did not seem to make much way in introducing any practical improvement in its mode of working. His friend Robison says he struggled long to condense with sufficient rapidity without injection, trying one expedient after another, finding out what would do by what would *not* do, and exhibiting many beautiful specimens of ingenuity and fertility of resource. He continued, to use his own words, "to grope in the dark, misled by many an *ignis fatuus*." It was a favourite saying of his, that "Nature has a weak side, if we can only find it out;" and he went on groping and feeling for it, but as yet in vain. At length light burst upon him, and all at once the problem over which he had been brooding was solved.

¹ *A machine constructed by Newcomen was as yet the most successful in using the power of steam.*

One Sunday afternoon, in the spring of 1765, he went to take an afternoon walk on the Green, then a quiet, grassy meadow, used as a bleaching and grazing ground. On week-days the Glasgow lasses came thither with their largest kail-pots, to boil their clothes in ; and sturdy queans might be seen, with coats kilted, tramping blankets in their tubs. On Sundays the place was comparatively deserted, and hence Watt went thither to take a quiet afternoon's stroll. His thoughts were as usual running on the subject of his unsatisfactory experiments with the Newcomen engine, when the first idea of the *separate condenser* suddenly flashed upon his mind. But the notable discovery is best told in his own words, as related to Mr. Robert Hart, many years after :—

“I had gone to take a walk on a fine Sabbath afternoon. I had entered the Green by the gate at the foot of Charlotte Street, and had passed the old washing-house. I was thinking upon the engine at the time, and had gone as far as the herd's house, when the idea came into my mind that as steam was an elastic body it would rush into a vacuum, and if a communication were made between the cylinder and an exhausted vessel,² it would rush into it, and might be there condensed without cooling the cylinder.³ I then saw that I must get rid of the condensed steam and injection-water if I used a jet, as in Newcomen's engine. Two ways of doing this occurred to me. First, the water might be run off by a descending pipe, if an off-let could be got at the depth of 35 or 36 feet, and any air might be extracted by a small pump. The second was to

² *A vessel from which the air it contained had been exhausted.*

³ *The chief difficulty in the way of using steam had arisen from the practice of condensing it by an injection of cold water into the cylinder when it had forced the piston upwards. This cooled the cylinder, and consequently a greater amount of steam was needed to force the piston up again.*

make the pump large enough to extract both water and air." He continued: "I had not walked further than the Golf House when the whole thing was arranged in my mind."

Great and prolific ideas are almost always simple. What seems impossible at the outset appears so obvious when it is effected that we are prone to marvel that it did not force itself at once upon the mind. Late in life Watt, with his accustomed modesty, declared his belief that if he had excelled, it had been by chance and the neglect of others. To Professor Jardine he said "that when it was analysed the invention would not appear so great as it seemed to be. In the state," said he, "in which I found the steam-engine, it was no great effort of mind to observe that the quantity of fuel necessary to make it work would for ever prevent its extensive utility. The next step in my progress was equally easy—to inquire what was the cause of the great consumption of fuel: this, too, was readily suggested, viz., the waste of fuel which was necessary to bring the whole cylinder, piston, and adjacent parts from the coldness of water to the heat of steam, no fewer than from fifteen to twenty times in a minute." The question then occurred, How was this to be avoided or remedied? It was at this stage that the idea of carrying on the condensation in a separate vessel flashed upon his mind and solved the difficulty.

Mankind has been more just to Watt than he was to himself. There was no accident in the discovery. It was the result of close and continuous study; and the idea of the separate condenser was merely the last step of a long journey—a step which could not have been taken unless the road which led to it had been carefully and thoughtfully traversed. Dr. Black says, "This capital improvement flashed upon his mind at once, and filled him with rapture;" a statement which, spite of the unimpassioned nature of Watt, we can readily believe.

But, although the invention was complete in Watt's mind, it took him many long and laborious years to work out the details of the engine. His friend Robison, with whom his intimacy was maintained during these interesting experiments, has given a graphic account of the difficulties which he successively encountered and overcame. He relates that on his return from the country, after the College vacation in 1765, he went to have a chat with Watt, and communicate to him some observations he had made on Desaguliers' and Belidor's account of the steam-engine. He went straight into the parlour without ceremony, and found Watt sitting before the fire, looking at a little tin cistern which he had on his knee. Robison immediately started the conversation about steam, his mind, like Watt's, being occupied with the means of avoiding the excessive waste of heat in the Newcomen engine. Watt, all the while, kept looking into the fire, and after a time laid down the cistern at the foot of his chair, saying nothing. It seems that Watt felt rather nettled at Robison having communicated to a mechanic of the town a contrivance which he had hit upon for turning the cocks of his engine. When Robison therefore pressed his inquiry, Watt at length looked at him and said briskly, "You need not fash⁴ yourself any more about that, man; I have now made an engine that shall not waste a particle of steam. It shall all be boiling hot,—ay, and hot water injected, if I please." He then pushed the little tin cistern with his foot under the table.

Robison could learn no more of the new contrivance from Watt at that time; but on the same evening he accidentally met a mutual acquaintance, who, supposing he knew as usual the progress of Watt's experiments, observed to him, "Well, have you seen Jamie Watt?"—"Yes."—"He'll be in fine spirits now with his engine?"—"Yes,"

⁴ *Trouble.*

said Robison, "very fine spirits."—"Gad!" said the other, "the separate condenser's the very thing: keep it but cold enough, and you may have a perfect vacuum, whatever be the heat of the cylinder." This was Watt's secret, and the nature of the contrivance was clear to Robison at once.

XVIII.

BATTLE OF THE NILE.

SOUTHEY.

[After a few years the peaceful progress of England was disturbed by a fresh war with France. France had risen against the tyranny which had long oppressed her; and her first efforts to obtain freedom were warmly greeted by nearly all Englishmen. Unfortunately the Continental sovereigns, in dread of this revolution, resolved to put it down by force of arms; and their invasion drove France to a frenzy of alarm. Terrible crimes were committed, and the King, Louis the Sixteenth, was put to death. The invaders however were driven back; and in the pride of its success the French Republic determined to carry its freedom over the world by dint of the sword. England was already estranged by the crimes and bloodshed of the Revolution; she was now alarmed by the spread of Republican principles at home, and yet more by the sudden greatness which France acquired abroad; and she was determined to maintain against the Republic, as against the Bourbons in older days, the balance of power. On the French invading Holland, therefore, England declared war. The war lasted more than twenty years; but it changed its character more than once. At first it was a war against the Revolution. On land the English were unsuccessful: but their defeats were redeemed by great victories at sea. Of these the greatest was the Battle of the Nile. The young French general, Napoleon Buona-parté, after a course of marvellous victories, resolved to revolutionize the East, and to wrest India from England.

As a first step to this, he sailed under escort from a French fleet to Alexandria, and conquered Egypt. But Nelson, the first of British seamen, followed him, and finding the French ships ranged in line in Aboukir Bay, resolved on an attack.]

THE moment Nelson perceived the position of the French, that intuitive genius with which he was endowed displayed itself; and it instantly struck him, that where there was room for an enemy's ship to swing,¹ there was room for one of ours to anchor. The plan which he intended to pursue, therefore, was to keep entirely on the outer side of the French line, and station his ships, as far as he was able, one on the outer bow, and another on the outer quarter, of each of the enemy's. Captain Berry, when he comprehended the scope of the design, exclaimed with transport, "If we succeed, what will the world say!" "There is no *if* in the case," replied the Admiral: "that we shall succeed, is certain: who may live to tell the story is a very different question."

As the squadron advanced, they were assailed by a shower of shot and shells from the batteries on the island, and the enemy opened a steady fire from the starboard side of their whole line, within half gun-shot distance, full into the bows of our van ships. It was received in silence: the men on board every ship were employed aloft in furling sails, and below in tending the braces, and making ready for anchoring. Captain Foley led the way in the *Goliath*, out-sailing the *Zealous*, which for some minutes disputed this post of honour with him. He had long conceived that if the enemy were moored in line of battle in with the land the best plan of attack would be to lead between them and the shore, because the French guns on that side were not likely to be manned, nor even ready for action. Intending, therefore,

¹ *Ride freely at anchor.*

to fix himself on the inner bow of the *Guerrier*, he kept as near the edge of the bank as the depth of water would admit ; but his anchor hung, and having opened his fire, he drifted to the second ship, the *Conquerant*, before it was clear ; then anchored by the stern, inside of her, and in ten minutes shot away her mast. Hood, in the *Zealous*, perceiving this, took the station which the *Goliath* intended to have occupied, and totally disabled the *Guerrier* in twelve minutes. The third ship which doubled the enemy's van was the *Orion*, Sir J. Saumarez ; she passed to windward of the *Zealous*, and opened her larboard guns as long as they bore on the *Guerrier* ; then passing inside the *Goliath*, sunk a frigate which annoyed her, hauled round towards the French line, and anchoring inside, between the fifth and sixth ships from the *Guerrier*, took her station on the larboard bow of the *Franklin*, and the quarter of the *Peuple Souverain*, receiving and returning the fire of both. The sun was now nearly down. The *Audacious*, Captain Gould, pouring a heavy fire into the *Guerrier* and *Conquerant*, fixed herself on the larboard bow of the latter ; and when that ship struck, passed on to the *Peuple Souverain*. The *Theseus*, Captain Miller, followed, brought down the *Guerrier's* remaining main- and mizen-masts, then anchored inside of the *Spartiate*, the third in the French line.

While these advanced ships doubled the French line, the *Vanguard* was the first that anchored on the outer side of the enemy, within half pistol-shot of their third ship, the *Spartiate*. Nelson had six colours flying in different parts of his rigging, lest they should be shot away—that they should be struck, no British admiral considers as a possibility. He veered half a cable, and instantly opened a tremendous fire, under cover of which the other four ships of his division, the *Minotaur*, *Bellerophon*, *Defence*, and *Majestic*, sailed on ahead of the Admiral. In a few minutes

every man stationed at the first six guns in the forepart of the *Vanguard's* deck was killed or wounded—these guns were three times cleared. Captain Louis, in the *Minotaur*, anchored next ahead, and took off the fire of the *Aquilon*, the fourth in the enemy's line. The *Bellerophon*, Captain Darby, passed ahead, and dropt her stern anchor on the starboard bow of the *Orient*, seventh in the line, Brueys'² own ship, of one hundred and twenty guns, whose difference of force was in proportion of more than seven to three, and whose weight of ball, from the lower deck alone, exceeded that from the whole broadside of the *Bellerophon*. Captain Peyton, in the *Defence*, took his station ahead of the *Minotaur*, and engaged the *Franklin*, the sixth in the line; by which judicious movement the British line remained unbroken. The *Majestic*, Captain Westcott, got entangled with the main rigging of one of the French ships astern of the *Orient*, and suffered dreadfully from that three decker's fire: but she swung clear, and closely engaging the *Heureux*, the ninth ship on the starboard bow, received also the fire of the *Tonnant*, which was the eighth in the line. The other four ships of the British squadron, having been detached previous to the discovery of the French, were at a considerable distance when the action began. It commenced at half after six; about seven, night closed, and there was no other light than that from the fire of the contending fleets.

Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, then foremost of the remaining ships, was two leagues astern. He came on sounding, as the others had done: as he advanced, the increasing darkness increased the difficulty of the navigation; and suddenly, after having found eleven fathoms of water, before the lead could be hove again he was fast aground; nor could all his own exertions, joined to those

² *Brueys was admiral of the French fleet.*

of the *Leander* and *Mutine* brig, which came to his assistance, get him off in time to bear a part in the action. His ship, however, served as a beacon to the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure*, which would else, from the course which they were holding, have gone considerably farther on the reef, and must inevitably have been lost; these ships entered the bay, and took their stations in the darkness, in a manner still spoken of with admiration by all who remembered it. Captain Hallowell, in the *Swiftsure*, as he was bearing down, fell in with what seemed to be a strange sail. Nelson had directed his ships to hoist four lights horizontally at the mizen-peak as soon as it became dark; and this vessel had no such distinction. Hallowell, however, with great judgment, ordered his men not to fire: if she was an enemy, he said, she was in too disabled a state to escape; but, from her sails being loose, and the way in which her head was, it was probable she might be an English ship. It was the *Bellerophon* overpowered by the huge *Orient*: her lights had gone overboard, nearly two hundred of her crew were killed or wounded, all her masts and cables had been shot away; and she was drifting out of the line, towards the lee side of the bay. Her station at this important time was occupied by the *Swiftsure*, which opened a steady fire on the quarter of the *Franklin* and the bows of the French Admiral. At the same instant, Captain Ball, with the *Alexander*, passed under his stern, and anchored within side on his larboard quarter, raking him, and keeping up a severe fire of musketry upon his decks. The last ship which arrived to complete the destruction of the enemy was the *Leander*. Captain Thompson, finding that nothing could be done that night to get off the *Culoden*, advanced with the intention of anchoring athwart-hawse of the *Orient*. The *Franklin* was so near her ahead that there was not room for him to pass clear of the two; he

therefore took his station athwart-hawse of the latter, in such a position as to rake both.

The two first ships of the French line had been dismasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action; and the others had in that time suffered so severely that victory was certain. The third, fourth, and fifth were taken possession of at half-past eight. Meantime Nelson received a severe wound on the head from a piece of langridge shot. Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an apprehension that the wound was mortal: Nelson himself thought so. A large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye; and the other being blind, he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon—in the midst of a scene scarcely to be conceived by those who have never seen a cockpit in time of action, and the heroism which is displayed amid its horrors—with a natural and pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his hands that he might instantly attend the Admiral. “No!” said Nelson, “I will take my turn with my brave fellows.” Nor would he suffer his own wound to be examined till every man who had been previously wounded was properly attended to. Fully believing that the wound was mortal, and that he was about to die, as he had ever desired, in battle and in victory, he called the chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he supposed to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson. He then sent for Captain Louis on board from the *Minotaur*, that he might thank him personally for the great assistance which he had rendered to the *Vanguard*; and ever mindful of those who deserved to be his friends, appointed Captain Hardy from the brig to the command of his own ship, Captain Berry having to go home with the news of the victory. When the surgeon came in due time to examine

his wound (for it was in vain to entreat him to let it be examined sooner), the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the wounded men and of the whole crew, when they heard that the hurt was merely superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. The surgeon requested, and as far as he could, ordered him, to remain quiet; but Nelson could not rest. He called for his secretary, Mr. Campbell, to write the despatches. Campbell had himself been wounded; and was so affected at the blind and suffering state of the Admiral that he was unable to write. The chaplain was then sent for; but before he came, Nelson, with his characteristic eagerness, took the pen, and contrived to trace a few words, marking his devout sense of the success which had already been obtained. He was now left alone; when suddenly a cry was heard on the deck that the *Orient* was on fire. In the confusion he found his way up, unassisted and unnoticed; and, to the astonishment of every one, appeared on the quarter-deck, where he immediately gave orders that boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy.

It was soon after nine that the fire on board the *Orient* broke out. Brueys was dead: he had received three wounds, yet would not leave his post: a fourth cut him almost in two. He desired not to be carried below, but to be left to die upon deck. The flames soon mastered his ship. Her sides had just been painted; and the oil-jars and paint-buckets were lying on the poop. By the prodigious light of this conflagration the situation of the two fleets could now be perceived, the colours of both being clearly distinguishable. About ten o'clock the ship blew up, with a shock which was felt to the very bottom of every vessel. Many of her officers and men jumped overboard, some clinging to the spars and pieces of wreck with which

the sea was strewn, others swimming to escape from the destruction which they momentarily dreaded. Some were picked up by our boats; and some even in the heat and fury of the action were dragged into the lower ports of the nearest British ships by the British sailors. The greater part of her crew, however, stood the danger till the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck. This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful: the firing immediately ceased on both sides; and the first sound which broke the silence was the dash of her shattered masts and yards falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been exploded. It is upon record that a battle between two armies was once broken off by an earthquake—such an event would be felt like a miracle; but no incident in war, produced by human means, has ever equalled the sublimity of this co-instantaneous pause and all its circumstances.

About seventy of the *Orient's* crew were saved by the English boats. Among the many hundreds who perished were the commodore, Casa-Bianca, and his son, a brave boy, only ten years old. They were seen floating on a shattered mast when the ship blew up. She had money on board (the plunder of Malta) to the amount of 600,000*l.* sterling. The masses of burning wreck, which were scattered by the explosion, excited for some moments apprehensions in the English which they had never felt from any other danger. Two large pieces fell into the main and foretops of the *Swiftsure* without injuring any person. A port-fire also fell into the main-royal of the *Alexander*: the fire which it occasioned was speedily extinguished. Captain Ball had provided, as far as human foresight could provide, against any such danger. All the shrouds and sails of his ship, not absolutely necessary for its immediate management, were thoroughly wetted, and so rolled up that they

were as hard and as little inflammable as so many solid cylinders.

The fire recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre ; and continued till about three. At daybreak the *Guillaume Tell* and the *Généreux*, the two rear-ships of the enemy, were the only French ships of the line which had their colours flying ; they cut their cables in the forenoon, not having been engaged, and stood out to sea, and two frigates with them. The *Zealous* pursued ; but as there was no other ship in a condition to support Captain Hood, he was recalled. It was generally believed by the officers, that if Nelson had not been wounded, not one of these ships could have escaped—the four certainly could not if the *Culloden* had got into action—and if the frigates belonging to the squadron had been present, not one of the enemy's fleet would have left Aboukir Bay. These four vessels, however, were all that escaped ; and the victory was the most complete and glorious in the annals of naval history. "Victory," said Nelson, "is not a name strong enough for such a scene ;" he called it a conquest. Of thirteen sail of the line nine were taken and two burnt ; of the four frigates one was sunk, another, the *Artemise*, was burnt in a villainous manner by her captain, M. Estandlet, who, having fired a broadside at the *Theseus*, struck his colours, then set fire to the ship, and escaped, with most of his crew, to shore. The British loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to eight hundred and ninety-five. Westcott was the only captain who fell. Three thousand one hundred and five of the French, including the wounded, were sent on shore by cartel, and five thousand two hundred and twenty five perished.

XIX.

DEATH OF NELSON.

SOUTHEY.

[Nelson's victory foiled Buonaparte's designs, while it encouraged Europe to rise against the French Republic. But Buonaparte returned to France, and by fresh victories restored its supremacy. He had no sooner done this, however, than he overthrew the Republic and set up a despotism in its stead with himself as Emperor at its head. He resolved to make himself master of all Europe; and to begin the work by the invasion and conquest of England. For this purpose he gathered a great army at Boulogne, and called all his fleet to the Channel to cover its crossing. Nelson, however, met the French ships in Trafalgar Bay, and in a wonderful victory almost wholly destroyed them. In the moment of triumph the great seaman was shot by a marksman in the French ship he was attacking.]

THE enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the *Victory*,¹ till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-topgallant sail: then they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one of them should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike. For this reason, the *Santissima Trinidad*, Nelson's old acquaintance, as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks; and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the *Victory* to be steered. Meantime an incessant raking fire was kept up upon the *Victory*. The Admiral's

¹ *Nelson's flag-ship.*

secretary was one of the first who fell ; he was killed by a cannon shot while conversing with Hardy. Captain Adair, of the marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great regard for Mr. Scott ; but he anxiously asked, " Is that poor Scott that's gone ? " and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed, " Poor fellow ! " Presently a double-headed shot struck a party of marines who were drawn up on the poop, and killed eight of them : upon which Nelson immediately desired Captain Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterwards a shot struck the fore-brace-bits on the quarter-deck and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle and bruising his foot. Both stopped and looked anxiously at each other, each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled and said, " This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long. "

The *Victory* had not yet returned a single gun : fifty of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-topmast, with all her studding-sails and her booms, shot away. Nelson declared that in all his battles he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew upon this occasion. At four minutes after twelve she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships ; Hardy² informed him of this, and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied, " Take your choice, Hardy, it does not signify much. " The master was ordered to put the helm to port, and the *Victory* ran on board the *Redoubtable*, just as her tiller ropes were shot away. The French ship received her with a broadside : then instantly let down her lower deck ports, for fear of being

² *Captain of the "Victory."*

boarded through them, and never afterwards fired a great gun during the action. Her tops, like those of all the enemy's ships, were filled with riflemen. Nelson never placed musketry in his tops ; he had a strong dislike to the practice ; not merely because it endangers setting fire to the sails, but also because it is a murderous sort of warfare, by which individuals may suffer, and a commander now and then be picked off, but which never can decide the fate of a general engagement.

Captain Harvey, in the *Téméraire*, fell on board the *Redoubtable* on the other side. Another enemy was in like manner on board the *Téméraire* : so that these four ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together, their heads lying all the same way. The lieutenants of the *Victory* seeing this, depressed their guns of the middle and lower decks, and fired with a diminished charge, lest the shot should pass through and injure the *Téméraire*. And because there was danger that the *Redoubtable* might take fire from the lower deck guns, the muzzles of which touched her side when they were run out, the fireman of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water ; which, as soon as the gun was discharged, he dashed into the hole made by the shot. An incessant fire was kept up from the *Victory* from both sides ; her larboard guns playing upon the *Bucentaure* and the huge *Santissima Trinidad*.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoubtable*, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent ; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizentop, which, in the then situation of the two vessels, was not more than

fifteen yards from that part of the deck from where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face on the spot which was covered with his poor secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. "They have done for me at last, Hardy," said he.—"I hope not," cried Hardy.—"Yes!" he replied; "my back-bone is shot through." Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller-ropes which had been shot away were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately—then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars.—Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England, perhaps, would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men, over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all except Captain Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back, and the gush of blood he felt momentarily within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful; "For," said he, "you can do nothing for me." All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory*

hurraed; and at every hurra, a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes and marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Captain Hardy; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried: "Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!" An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound, before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence; Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. "Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?"—"Very well," replied Hardy; "ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing."—"I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck?" Hardy answered, "There was no fear of that." Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. "I am a dead man, Hardy," said he: "I am going fast—it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me." Hardy observed that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. "Oh, no!" he replied: "it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so." Captain Hardy then once more shook hands with him; and with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all the feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson having made the surgeon ascertain this, said to him, "You know I am gone; I know it. I feel something rising in my breast"—putting his hand on his left side—"which tells me so." And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great, he replied, "So great that he wished he was dead. Ye:", said he, in a lower voice, "one would

like to live a little longer too !” And after a few minutes, in the same undertone he added, “What would become of poor Lady Hamilton if she knew my situation !” Next to his country she occupied his thoughts. Captain Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned : and again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly ; but fourteen or fifteen at least. “That’s well,” cried Nelson, “but I bargained for twenty.” And then in a stronger voice he said, “Anchor, Hardy, anchor.” Hardy upon this hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. “Not while I live, Hardy,” said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed ; “do you anchor.” His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently calling Hardy back, he said to him in a low voice, “Don’t throw me overboard.” And he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the king to order otherwise. Then reverting to private feelings, “Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy ; take care of poor Lady Hamilton.—Kiss me, Hardy,” said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek ; and Nelson said, “Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty.” Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again and kissed his forehead. “Who is that ?” said Nelson ; and being informed, he replied, “God bless you, Hardy !” And Hardy then left him for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said, “I wish I had not left the deck ; for I shall soon be gone.” Death was indeed rapidly approaching. He said to the chaplain, “Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner ;” and after a short pause, “Remember that I leave Lady

Hamilton and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country." His articulation now became difficult ; but he was distinctly heard to say, "Thank God, I have done my duty." These words he repeatedly pronounced ; and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.

XX.

THE BATTLE OF ALBUERA.

NAPIER.

[The victory of Trafalgar secured England from invasion, and left her mistress of the seas. But Buonaparte, who became the Emperor Napoleon, was made by victories as great almost absolute master of the Continent ; and the two great rival powers of land and sea were left face to face. At last the Emperor's sway was broken by a rising of the Spanish people on his seizure of Spain ; and England at once backed this by sending her troops to its support. After a while Wellington became their general ; and a war began in which he encountered many of Napoleon's marshals with success. One of the most brilliant events of this war was the repulse of an attack under Marshal Soult by a British force commanded by Marshal Beresford, at Albuera.]

SOULT had forty guns, four thousand veteran cavalry, and nineteen thousand chosen infantry, all of one discipline, animated by one spirit, and amply compensated for their inferiority in number by their fine organization and their leader's capacity, which was immeasurably greater than his adversary's.¹ He had examined the position without hindrance on the evening of the 15th, and hearing that the

¹ *Marshal Beresford.*

fourth division was left at Badajos, and that Blake would not arrive before the 17th, resolved to attack next morning, for he had detected the weakness of Beresford's dispositions. The hill in the centre, commanding the Valverde road, was undoubtedly the key of the position if an attack was made parallel to the front ; but Soult saw that on the right a high rough broken table-land trended back towards the Valverde road and looked into the rear of Beresford's line. Hence if he could suddenly place his masses there he might roll up the allies on their centre and push them into the valley behind ; the Valverde road could then be seized, the retreat cut, and the strong French cavalry would complete the victory.

[His plans were admirably carried out on the following morning. While the British troops were still occupied in taking up their position, and their Spanish allies were delaying to move, the French broke in upon their rear.]

Half an hour had sufficed to render Beresford's position nearly desperate. Two-thirds of the French were in compact order of battle perpendicular to his right, and his army, composed of different nations,² was making a disorderly change of front. Vainly he tried to get the Spanish line advanced to make room for the second division to support it, the French guns opened, their infantry threw out a heavy musketry fire, and their cavalry, outflanking the front and menacing different points, put the Spaniards in disorder: they fell fast and went back.

Soult thought the whole army was yielding, he pushed forward his columns, his reserves mounted the hill behind him, and General Ruty placed all the French batteries in position ; but then William Stewart reached the foot of the height with a brigade of the second division under Colborne, who seeing the confusion above, desired to form

² *English, Spanish, and Portuguese.*

in order of battle previous to mounting. But Stewart, whose boiling courage generally overlaid his judgment, led up in column of companies, passed the Spanish right, and attempted to open a line by succession of battalions as they arrived. The enemy's fire was found too destructive to be borne passively, and the foremost troops charged; but then heavy rain obscured the view, four regiments of French hussars and lancers galloped in from the right at the moment of advancing, and two-thirds of the brigade went down: the 31st Regiment only, being on the left, formed square and resisted, while the French horsemen, riding furiously about, trampled the others, and captured six guns. The tumult was great; a lancer fell upon Beresford, who, being a man of great strength, put aside the lance and cast him from his saddle; and then a shift of wind blowing aside the smoke and mist, Lumley perceived the mischief from the plain below, and sending four squadrons up against the straggling lancers, cut many of them off: Penne Villemur's Spanish cavalry was also directed to charge the French horsemen in the plain, and they galloped forward until within a few yards of their foes but then shamefully fled.

During this first unhappy effort of the second division so great was the disorder, that the Spaniards in one part fired without cessation, though the British troops were before them; in another part, flying before the lancers, they would have broken through the 29th, then advancing to succour Colborne, but with a stern resolution that regiment smote friends and foes without distinction in their onward progress. Meanwhile Beresford, finding the main body of the Spaniards would not advance, seized an ensign by the breast and bore him and his colours by main force to the front, yet the troops did not follow, and the coward ran back when released from the Marshal's iron grasp. In this crisis the weather, which had ruined Colborne's brigade,

saved the day. Soult could not see the whole field of battle, and kept his heavy columns inactive when the decisive blow might have been struck. His cavalry, indeed, began to hem in that of the allies, yet the fire of the horse artillery enabled Lumley, covered as he was by the bed of the Aroya and supported by the fourth division, to check them on the plain; Colborne still remained on the height with the 31st Regiment. The British artillery, under Julius Hartman, was coming fast into action, and William Stewart, who had escaped the charge of the lancers, was again mounting the hill with Houghton's brigade, which he brought on with equal vehemence, but in a juster order of battle. The day then cleared, and a dreadful fire poured into the thickest of the French columns convinced Soult that the fight was yet to be won.

Houghton's regiments reached the height under a heavy cannonade, and the 29th, after breaking through the fugitive Spaniards, was charged in flank by the French lancers; yet two companies, wheeling to the right, foiled this attack with a sharp fire, and then the third brigade of the second division came up on the left, and the Spanish troops, under Zayas and Ballesteros, at last moved forward. Hartman's artillery was now in full play, and the enemy's infantry recoiled, but, soon recovering, renewed the fight with greater violence than before. The cannon on both sides discharged showers of grape at half range, the peals of musketry were incessant, often within pistol-shot, yet the close formation of the French embarrassed their battle, and the British line would not yield them an inch of ground or a moment of time to open their ranks. Their fighting was, however, fierce and dangerous. Stewart was twice wounded, Colonel Duckworth was slain, and the intrepid Houghton, having received many wounds without shrinking, fell and died in the very act of cheering on his men. Still the

struggle continued with unabated fury. Colonel Inglis, twenty-two officers, and more than four hundred men, out of five hundred and seventy who had mounted the hill, fell in the 57th alone; the other regiments were scarcely better off, not one-third were standing in any: ammunition failed, and as the English fire slackened a French column was established in advance upon the right flank. The play of the guns checked them a moment, but in this dreadful crisis Beresford wavered! Destruction stared him in the face, his personal resources were exhausted, and the unhappy thought of a retreat rose in his agitated mind. He had before brought Hamilton's Portuguese into a situation to cover a retrograde movement; he now sent Alten orders to abandon the bridge and village of Albuera, and to take with his Germans and the Portuguese artillery a position to cover a retreat by the Valverde road. But while the commander was thus preparing to resign the contest, Colonel Hardinge had urged Cole to advance with the fourth division; and then riding to the third brigade of the second division, which, under the command of Colonel Abercrombie, had hitherto been only slightly engaged, directed him also to push forward into the fight. The die was thus cast, Beresford acquiesced, Alten received orders to retake the village, and this terrible battle was continued.

The fourth division was composed of two brigades: one of Portuguese, under General Harvey; the other, under Sir William Myers, consisting of the 7th and 23rd Regiments, was called the fusileer brigade: Harvey's Portuguese were immediately pushed in between Lumley's dragoons and the hill, where they were charged by some French cavalry, whom they beat off, and meantime Cole led his fusileers up the contested height. At this time six guns were in the enemy's possession, the whole of the Werlé's reserves

were coming forward to reinforce the front column of the French, the remnant of Houghton's brigade could no longer maintain its ground, the field was heaped with carcasses, the lancers were riding furiously about the captured artillery on the upper parts of the hill, and, behind all, Hamilton's Portuguese and Alten's Germans, now withdrawing from the bridge, seemed to be in full retreat. Soon, however, Cole's fusileers, flanked by a battalion of the Lusitanian legion, under Colonel Hawkshawe, mounted the hill, drove off the lancers, recovered five of the captured guns and one colour, and appeared on the right of Houghton's brigade, precisely as Abercrombie passed it on the left.

Such a gallant line, issuing from the midst of the smoke and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's masses, which were increasing and pressing onwards as to an assured victory; they wavered, hesitated, and then vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed, Cole and the three colonels, Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshawe, fell wounded, and the fusileer battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships; but suddenly and sternly recovering they closed on their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult with voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen, in vain did the hardiest veterans break from the crowded columns and sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to open out on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately upon friends and foes, while the horsemen hovering on the flank threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous

enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order, their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front, their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as slowly and with a horrid carnage it was pushed by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill. In vain did the French reserves mix with the struggling multitude to sustain the fight, their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion, and the mighty mass, breaking off like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the steep : the rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and eighteen hundred **unwounded** men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill.

XXI.

WATERLOO.

GREEN.

[While the French were being pressed hard in Spain, Napoleon's empire broke down before a coalition of the European powers, and he was driven into exile at Elba. He returned however, was again received by France, and finding Europe still against him, resolved to break the league of her states by crushing first the English, and then the Prussian army, who then occupied Belgium under Wellington and Blucher.]

NAPOLEON landed on the 1st March, 1815, on the coast near Cannes, and, followed only by a thousand of his guards, marched over the mountains of Dauphiné upon Grenoble and Lyons. He counted, and counted justly, on

the indifference of the country to its new Bourbon rulers,¹ on the longing of the army for a fresh struggle which should restore its glory, and above all on the spell of his name over soldiers whom he had so often led to victory. In twenty days from his landing he reached the Tuileries unopposed, while Lewis the Eighteenth fled helplessly to Ghent. But whatever hopes he had drawn from the divisions of the Allied Powers were at once dispelled by their resolute action on the news of his descent upon France. Their strife was hushed and their old union restored by the consciousness of a common danger. A Declaration adopted instantly by all put Napoleon to the ban of Europe. An engagement to supply a million of men for the purposes of the war, and a recall of their armies to the Rhine, gave practical effect to the words of the Allies. England furnished subsidies to the amount of eleven millions to support these enormous hosts, and hastened to place an army on the frontier of the Netherlands. The best troops of the force which had been employed in the Peninsula however were still across the Atlantic; and of the eighty thousand men who gathered round Wellington only about a half were Englishmen, the rest principally raw levies from Belgium and Hanover. The Duke's plan was to unite with the one hundred and fifty thousand Prussians under Marshal Blucher who were advancing on the Lower Rhine, and to enter France by Mons and Namur while the forces of Austria and Russia closed in upon Paris by way of Belfort and Elsass.

Napoleon had thrown aside all thought of a merely defensive war. By amazing efforts he had raised an army of two hundred and fifty thousand men in the few months since his arrival in Paris; and in the opening of June one hundred and twenty thousand Frenchmen were concentrated on the

¹ *On Napoleon's abdication Lewis the Eighteenth had been placed upon the throne.*

Sambre at Charleroi, while Wellington's troops still lay in cantonments on the line of the Scheldt from Ath to Nivelles, and Blucher's on that of the Meuse from Nivelles to Liège. Both the allied armies hastened to unite at Quatre Bras ; but their junction was already impossible. Blucher with eighty thousand men was himself attacked on the 16th by Napoleon at Ligny, and after a desperate contest driven back with terrible loss upon Wavre. On the same day Ney² with twenty thousand men, and an equal force under D'Erion in reserve, appeared before Quatre Bras, where as yet only ten thousand English and the same force of Belgian troops had been able to assemble. The Belgians broke before the charges of the French horse ; but the dogged resistance of the English infantry gave time for Wellington to bring up corps after corps, till at the close of the day Ney saw himself heavily outnumbered, and withdrew baffled from the field. About five thousand men had fallen on either side in this fierce engagement : but heavy as was Wellington's loss, the firmness of the English army had already done much to foil Napoleon's effort at breaking through the line of the Allies. Blucher's retreat however left the English flank uncovered ; and on the following day, while the Prussians were falling back on Wavre, Wellington with nearly seventy thousand men—for his army was now well in hand—withdraw in good order upon Waterloo, followed by the mass of the French forces under the Emperor himself.

Napoleon had detached Marshal Grouchy with thirty thousand men to hang upon the rear of the beaten Prussians while with a force of eighty thousand men he resolved to bring Wellington to battle. On the morning of the 18th of June the two armies faced one another on the field of Waterloo in front of the forest of Soignies, on the high road to Brussels. Napoleon's one fear had been

² *The bravest of Napoleon's marshals.*

that of a continued retreat. "I have them!" he cried, as he saw the English line drawn up on a low rise of ground which stretched across the high road from the château of Hougomont on its right to the farm and straggling village of La Haye Sainte on its left. He had some grounds for his confidence of success. On either side the forces numbered between seventy and eighty thousand men; but the French were superior in guns and cavalry, and a large part of Wellington's force consisted of Belgian levies who broke and fled at the outset of the fight. A fierce attack upon Hougomont opened the battle at eleven; but it was not till midday that the corps of D'Erlon advanced upon the centre near La Haye Sainte, which from that time bore the main brunt of the struggle. Never has greater courage, whether of attack or endurance, been shown on any field than was shown by both combatants at Waterloo. The columns of D'Erlon, repulsed by the English foot, were hurled back in disorder by a charge of the Scots Greys; but the victorious horsemen were crushed in their turn by the French cuirassiers, and the mass of the French cavalry, twelve thousand strong, flung itself in charge after charge on the English front, carrying the English guns and sweeping with desperate bravery round the unbroken squares whose fire thinned their ranks. With almost equal bravery the French columns of the centre again advanced, wrested at last the farm of La Haye Sainte from their opponents, and pushed on vigorously though in vain under Ney against the troops in its rear.

Terrible as was the English loss—and many of his regiments were reduced to a mere handful of men—Wellington stubbornly held his ground while the Prussians, advancing, as they promised, from Wavre through deep and miry forest roads, were slowly gathering to his support, disregarding the attack on their rear by which Grouchy strove

to hold them back from the field. At half-past four their advanced guard deployed at last from the woods; but the main body was still far behind, and Napoleon was still able to hold his ground against them till their increasing masses forced him to stake all on a desperate effort against the English front. The Imperial Guard—his only reserve, and which had as yet taken no part in the battle—was drawn up at seven in two huge columns of attack. The first, with Ney himself at its head, swept all before it as it mounted the rise beside La Haye Sainte, on which the thin English line still held its ground, and all but touched the English front when its mass, torn by the terrible fire of musketry with which it was received, gave way before a charge from the English Guards. The second, three thousand strong, advanced with the same courage over the slope near Hougomont, only to be shattered and repulsed in the same way. At the moment when these masses, shattered but still unconquered, fell slowly and doggedly back down the fatal rise, the Prussians pushed forward some forty thousand strong on Napoleon's right, their guns swept the road to Charleroi, and Wellington seized the moment for a general advance. From that moment all was lost. Only the Old Guard stood firm in the wreck of the French army; and nothing but night and exhaustion checked the English in their pursuit of the broken masses who hurried from the field. The Prussian horse continued the chase through the night, and only forty thousand Frenchmen with some thirty guns recrossed the Sambre. Napoleon himself fled hurriedly to Paris, and his second abdication was followed by the triumphant entry of the English and Prussian armies into the French capital.

XXII.

THE REFORM BILL.

SPENCER WALPOLE.

[What had enabled England to bear the stress of her long strife with France was in part the great increase of her wealth which took place during this struggle from the development of her manufacturing industry. It was in fact during this period that she became the manufacturing country of the world. Of these manufactures the most important was that of cotton, which found its main seat in Lancashire, and has made that county the wealthiest and most populous part of Britain. With the development of manufactures came a great displacement of population, which had drifted to the north of England, and a new activity of political thought. In the peace which followed on the fall of Napoleon, the English towns and trading classes began to crave for a larger share in the government of the country, and for this purpose to demand a rearrangement of the suffrage, or right under which men voted for members of the House of Commons, as well as of the number of members returned by the various shires and boroughs. The panic at any constitutional change which had been created by the French Revolution was still strong in England, and reform was bitterly opposed; but a break up of the Tory party in 1830, brought the Whigs into office; and they at once drew up a bill for effecting these changes.]

UNDER ordinary circumstances, it would have been natural to have entrusted the Reform Bill to the leader of the House of Commons. But the Cabinet decided that it should be introduced by Lord John Russell, the Paymaster of the Forces. Various reasons induced them to arrive at this decision. Lord John had for more than ten years actively

promoted the Reform of Parliament. A bill which was brought forward on his responsibility was therefore sure of favourable consideration by the Reformers. Lord John moreover was a younger brother of the Duke of Bedford; the duke was one of the largest territorial magnates in the country; he was the proprietor of rotten boroughs;¹ and a bill therefore recommended by his brother's authority was likely to reassure timid or wavering politicians. Something was indeed necessary to infuse spirit into the hearts of the Reformers in Parliament. Outside the House a crowd of people, anxiously collected throughout the greater portion of the day, testified their anxiety for the success of the measure which was about to be introduced. But, inside the House, Lord John was confronted by a compact body of Tories, anxious to learn what the Ministry were about to propose, but ready to forget their own differences in their dislike to all reform. Those who had expected a great declamatory speech from the introducer of the measure, were disappointed. Lord John told his tale in the plainest language. But the tale which he had to tell required no extraordinary eloquence to adorn it. The Radicals² had not dared to expect, the Tories in their wildest fears had not apprehended, so complete a measure. Enthusiasm was visible on one side of the House; consternation and dismay on the other. At last, when Lord John read the list of boroughs which were doomed to extinction, the Tories hoped that the completeness of the measure would ensure its defeat. Forgetting their fears, they began to be amused, and burst into peals of derisive laughter.

Men of large experience believed that, if Peel³ had risen, the moment Lord John sat down, and had declined to

¹ *Boroughs where there was no real constituency; and where members were really nominees of some private person.*

² *The more extreme reformers.* ³ *Sir Robert Peel, then leader of the Tories in the House of Commons.*

discuss a bill which was not a measure of "Reform but of Revolution," the House would have refused to allow the bill to be introduced. It is very unlikely, however, that such a result would have ensued. Tory members like Sir Robert Inglis had come down to the House primed with arguments to prove that little fishing villages in Cornwall, were better qualified to return members than the great manufacturing towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire. Tory members like Inglis, who had searched through Camden and Hatsell, Henry and Rapin, Hallam and Burke, who had telling quotations in their pockets from Horne Tooke's writings and Canning's speeches, would hardly have consented to waste all their labour by smothering the new-born infant in the very hour of its birth. The House, instead of dividing, talked out the night and adjourned till the morrow. The debate, thus adjourned, was protracted over seven nights; but every fresh adjournment strengthened the hands of the Ministry and weakened those of the Opposition. The measure, which had excited derision in the House, was received with enthusiasm out of doors. Resolutions, supporting the bill, were passed at monster meetings in all the large towns. Moderate members, warned by the attitude of the country, declined to commit themselves to an uncompromising opposition to the measure; and the bill, which might possibly have been thrown out on the 1st of March, was read a first time without a division on the 9th.

[The bill however soon found difficulties in the temper of the House; and the Ministry were forced either to abandon it or to resolve on an appeal to the country. The House of Lords, on hearing of their purpose to dissolve the Houses, determined to address the king against such a dissolution; but they were anticipated by the energy of William the Fourth.]

Fortunately for the Ministry, the king's consent was easily procured. However much he had originally disliked the proposal for a dissolution, he disliked much more the attempt which was to be made in the House of Lords to interfere with his prerogative to dissolve. He declared that he would go himself at once; that if his carriages could not be got ready he would go in a hackney coach. Trumpery difficulties, raised by some of his household, about preparing the state carriages and plaiting the horses' manes, might have proved impassable mountains in the reign of George—they were only molehills in the reign of William.

On the afternoon on which the dissolution took place the House of Lords met at two, the House of Commons at half-past two. The impending dissolution had just become known, and both Houses were the scene of disorder and confusion rarely witnessed in Parliament. In the House of Commons the violence was sufficiently marked. In the House of Lords the peers were nearly coming to blows. Wharncliffe had barely time to read his motion⁴ before his speech was stopped by shouts of "the king!" Brougham⁵ increased the uproar by angrily declaring that the House of Commons had thought fit to take the extreme and unprecedented step of refusing the supplies. The complaint only increased the anger of the Tories. Brougham was hooted. Lord Londonderry shook his fist at the Duke of Richmond. The peeresses who had come to look at the king trembled in the gallery. The king himself, alarmed at the uproar, hesitated for a moment to enter the House. Brougham, however, easily persuaded him that the indecorous uproar would be hushed by his presence. He came; and told his turbulent legislators that he had come to prorogue the Parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution.

⁴ *For an address against the dissolution.*
Chancellor.

⁵ *The Lord*

The consternation of the Opposition at the sudden dissolution of the Parliament of 1830 was exceeded by the enthusiasm which was created by the news of it in the country. London was illuminated; Tory peers had their windows broken by the mob; and even the great services of Wellington did not protect Apsley House from damage. Every one was required to illuminate, and duke or citizen who failed to manifest his participation in the universal elation, had to pay the penalty for his indifference to the general rejoicing. The illumination of the streets of London was, however, only one symptom of the general excitement. From John-o'-Groat's to the Land's End a cry was raised of "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill!" Printed lists were circulated stating the manner in which each member had voted on Gascoyne's motion.⁶ Every one who had directly or indirectly opposed reform incurred the full animosity of the populace. Gascoyne himself was defeated at Liverpool; Sir Robert Wilson, an ardent Reformer on most points, lost his seat at Southwark for having supported Gascoyne. County members like Vyvyan, the member for Cornwall; Knatchbull, the member for Kent; and Bankes, the member for Dorsetshire, were replaced by Reformers. Even the influence of the boroughmongers⁷ was lost in the crisis. For the first time the Duke of Newcastle found himself unable to do what he liked with his own. His candidates were defeated at Newark, at Bassetlaw, and in Nottinghamshire. Lord Lonsdale proved almost equally powerless in Cumberland. The mighty force of popular opinion, bursting the bonds by which it had been controlled, swept political power out of the hands of the borough-owners and transferred it to the people.

⁶ *A hostile amendment meant to force the withdrawal of the bill.*

⁷ *Men who returned their nominees as members to the Commons and sold their seats for money.*

XXIII.

THE RETREAT FROM CABUL.

ALISON.

[The change wrought by the Reform Bill was seen in a number of reforms, both in Church and State, which followed it, and which are due to the Whig ministries who held office for the ten years which followed its victory. Their great work at home however was sullied by a great crime abroad. A silly panic at the advance of Russia towards India drove the ministry to resolve on an invasion of Affghanistan, and this measure was carried out in a spirit of unscrupulous violence. For a while all seemed successful ; but after two years of occupation the Affghans were in revolt ; and a British force at Cabul was compelled to buy their permission to withdraw from the country. The bargain was only made to be broken ; and the retreat ended in an awful massacre.]

ON the sixth of January the march commenced, under circumstances of depression unparalleled in the annals of mankind. Deep snow covered every inch of mountain and plain with one unspotted sheet of dazzling white ; and so intensely bitter was the cold as to penetrate and defy the defences of the warmest clothing. Sad and suffering issued from the British cantonments a confused mass of Europeans and Asiatics, a mingled crowd of combatants and non-combatants, of men of various climes and complexion and habits—part of them peculiarly unfitted to endure the hardships of a rigorous climate, and many of a sex and tender age which in general exempts them from such scenes of horror. The number of the crowd was large—4,500 fighting men, of whom 700 were Europeans, with six guns and three mountain-train pieces, and upwards of 12,000 camp fol-

lowers. The advance began to issue from the cantonments at nine in the morning, and from that time till dark the huge and motley crowd continued to pour out of the gates, which were immediately occupied by a crowd of fanatical Affghans, who rent the air with their exulting cries, and fired without scruple on the retiring troops, by which fifty men were killed. When the cantonments were cleared all order was lost, and troops and camp-followers, and horses, and foot-soldiers, baggage, public and private, become involved in one inextricable confusion. "The shades of night overtook the huge multitude while still pushing their weary course; but the cold surface of the snow reflected the glow of light from the flames of the British residency and other buildings to which the Affghans had applied the torch the moment they were evacuated by our troops. Weary and desperate the men lay down on the snow without either food, fire, or covering; and great numbers were frozen to death before the first rays of the sun gilded the summits of the mountains."

Disastrous as were the circumstances under which this terrible march commenced, they were much aggravated on the succeeding day. All order was then lost—not a semblance even of military array was kept up save with the rearguard, while numbers of Affghans, evidently moving parallel to the retreating multitude, showed themselves on the heights above, and, in open defiance of the capitulation, commenced a fire upon them. They even attacked the rearguard, and after a violent struggle took the mountain-guns, which, though immediately retaken by Lieutenant Green, could not be brought away, and were spiked amidst the gleaming sabres of the enemy. "Two other guns were soon after abandoned, as the horses were unable to drag them through the snow. Although at nightfall they had only accomplished six miles of their wearisome journey,

the road was covered with dying wretches perishing under the intolerable cold. The Sepoys, patient and resigned, sank on the line of march, awaiting death. Horses, ponies, baggage-waggon, camp-followers, and soldiers were confusedly muddled, while over the dense mass the jezails of the Affghans, posted on the rocks and heights above, sent a storm of balls, every one of which took effect among the multitude. The enemy severely pressed on our rear, and three out of the four remaining guns fell into their hands. The soldiers, weary, starving, and frost-bitten, could no longer make any resistance. There was no hope but in the fidelity of Zemaun Khan, who had always been true to us ; but although he had exerted himself to procure supplies, scarcely any were got. Meanwhile, the attacks of the Affghans continued without intermission."

The army was in this dreadful state when it arrived at the entrance of the Coord Cabul defile. It is five miles in length, and bounded on either side with steep overhanging mountains. It is so narrow, the sun never penetrates its gloomy jaws ; there is barely room for a rugged road or horse-track between the torrent and the precipices. The stream dashes down the whole way with inconceivable impetuosity, and requires to be crossed eight-and-twenty times in the course of the ascent. To add to the horrors of this defile, the frost had covered the road and edges of the torrent with a coating of ice, on which the beasts of burden could find no secure footing, and in attempting to pass which great numbers slipped, fell into the water, and were swept down by its resistless rush. The heights above were crowded with Affghans, who, securely posted on the summits of precipices inaccessible from the bottom of the ravine, kept up an incessant fire on the confused and trembling multitude which was struggling through the defile beneath. All order was soon lost, if any still remained. Puggage.

ammunition, property, public and private, were abandoned at every step; and so complete was the paralysis that the Sepoys allowed their muskets to be taken out of their hands without attempting any resistance. The massacre was terrible in this frightful defile. Three thousand perished under the balls or knives of the Affghans; and in the midst of the confusion of this scene of carnage the English ladies, who accompanied the columns on horseback, often strained their eyes in vain to descry their children, lost in the horrors in which they were enveloped.

Such of the troops as contrived to get through this dreadful defile had fresh difficulties of a different kind to contend with. The road now ascended the high table-land of Coord Cabul, and the snow fell in great quantities, rendering it in many places impassable for animals or carriages. A cold biting wind from the north-east swept over the lofty bare surface, rendering it almost certain death to sit down, however wearied the wretches might be. Here, however, the whole army was obliged to bivouac, without covering, fire, or shelter of any kind. There were only four tents left; one was given to the General, two to the ladies, one to the sick. In compliance with a recommendation from Akbar Khan, the army halted for a day; but the inexpedience of this delay was so evident that a great part of the native troops and camp-followers moved on without any order, and the sepoy's began to desert in great numbers. Akbar Khan, seeing the troops reduced to this woeful plight, now renewed his demand for the giving up of the married officers and their wives, he promising to keep them a day's march in the rear of the army, and in perfect safety. Heartrending as this proposal was to honourable and gallant men, no resistance was made to it—so evident to all was the necessity of the case, and so certain the destruction which awaited them if they remained with the remnant of the troops. Soon

after the whole ladies, with their husbands, escorted by a troop of Affghan horse, set out for the rear of the army, and were placed in the power of the treacherous barbarian.

The European soldiers were now (10th January) almost the only efficient troops left. The sepoy, unaccustomed to a rigorous climate, had almost all sunk or been slain by the Affghans. Nearly all of them were frost-bitten in the hands, face, or feet; few were able to hold a musket, much less draw a trigger; the prolonged march in the snow had paralysed the mental and physical powers even of the strongest men. "Hope," says Eyre, "seemed to have died in every breast; the wildness of terror was exhibited in every countenance." The end was now approaching. At the entrance of a narrow gorge, where the road passed between two hills, a strong body of Affghan marksmen appeared, who barred all farther passage and kept up so heavy a fire on the column as it approached, that the whole sepoy broke and fled. Seeing this the Affghans rushed down, sword in hand, captured the public treasure, and all of the baggage which hitherto had been preserved. A hundred and fifty cavalry troopers, fifty horse artillerymen, one hundred and forty of the 44th, and one gun, alone forced their way through, and formed now the sole remaining fighting men of the army. Akbar proposed a surrender to this little body; but they indignantly rejected the proposal, and pushed on, sword in hand, through the crowds of camp-followers, bands of Affghans, and the snowy wilderness.

Still hovering around the rear guard, the Affghan horsemen continued the pursuit of the miserable but undaunted band of men who, in defiance of all obstacles, continued their course. Oppressed by a crowd of camp-followers, and almost as much impeded by them as by their enemies, the wreck of the British force made its desperate way down the

steep descent of the Haft-Kotul, strewn with the melancholy remains of camp-followers and soldiers who had formed the advance of the column. As they passed downwards to Fezeen, a heavy fire was opened on the flanks of the column ; but the rear guard, led by Shelton, with invincible firmness repelled the assault, and for a time preserved the remnant of the force from destruction. Seeing ruin inevitable if a start was not gained upon the enemy, Shelton proposed a night march, in the hope of shaking off the crowd of camp-followers which, from the very beginning, had clung to them, and proved as injurious as the jezails of the enemy. Having spiked their last gun, they set off at ten at night ; but the alarm had spread to the camp-followers, and they clustered round them as ruinously as before. It was a clear frosty night, and for some hours the march was unmolested ; but before morning the enemy overtook the rear and opened a fire on the dark moving mass, which impelled the terrified crowd of camp-followers upon the few soldiers in front, and blocking up the road, rendered it necessary for the rear guard to force a passage through at the bayonet's point. When the way was at length cleared, a dense mass of Affghans was found crowning the heights in front and barring any farther progress ; but the little band of European heroes, led by Shelton, kept the enemy in the rear in check, and gallantly forced their way through to Jugdulluck. Here the men lay down in the snow to gain a few hours' rest, after thirty hours' incessant marching and waking ; but hardly had they done so when a fire was opened upon them by the Affghans, and they were compelled once more to fight. The enemy, however, deterred by their resolution, fled on their approach ; and the wearied column returned to Jugdulluck, where they remained under the shelter of a ruined wall, but still exposed to the fire of the Affghans, all the succeeding day.

Here the conferences were resumed, and Akbar Khan insisted upon General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson, remaining hostages in his hands for the evacuation of Jellalabad. This was not at first agreed to, and these officers repaired to the Affghan chief's headquarters to arrange the terms, where they were detained by force, in defiance of their sacred character as pacific negotiators; Elphinstone and Shelton remained in Akbar Khan's hands; and Johnson, who understood Persian, overheard the party who surrounded them conversing in that language on the pleasure they would have in cutting the Feringhee's throats. The remaining body of the British, now reduced to one hundred and forty-five fighting men, resumed their march at nightfall on the 12th, and plunged into the deep and gloomy Jugdulluck Pass. On approaching the summit, they found the mouth blocked by a stout barricade, from behind which the Affghans threw in volley after volley on the struggling throng. Here Brigadier Antequil, Colonel Chambers, Major Thain, and Captain Nicholl, fell and died. Not above twenty officers and forty men succeeded in forcing the fatal barrier. Their only hope consisted in straggling on ahead of their pursuers to Jellalabad. As day dawned they approached Gundamuck; but there their numerical weakness became visible, and they were again surrounded by a body of the enemy. Captain Souter tied the colours of his regiment round his waist, by which they were preserved, and the unconquerable band of heroes pursued their way on, though sorely weakened at every step. In a desperate struggle on leaving Gundamuck, nearly every man in the British party was either killed or wounded. Twelve officers and a few cavalry, all bleeding, rode ahead of the troop, and all but six of them dropped down from their horses before reaching Futtehabad. This small remnant was treacherously assailed there, when taking

food, by the natives, who had professed sympathy, and began by showing kindness; two were slain, the others reached their horses and escaped. All perished, however, excepting one man, Dr. Brydon, before reaching Jellalabad. Worn out and wounded, he had struggled on, borne by a jaded pony, till the walls of the fortress appeared in sight. He was descried from the ramparts, and brought in by a party sent to succour him, being the sole survivor, not a captive, of the Affghanistan expedition.

XXIV.

GEORGE STEPHENSON.

J. H. FYFE.

[The invasion of Affghanistan, and the massacre which it brought about, so shook British power in India that war after war followed with the native powers which remained independent. Their struggles however were fruitless; and the conquest of Scinde and the Punjaub left England masters of all India. Meanwhile industrial energy at home was intensified by the application of steam to the purposes of transport. Steamships were made to traverse the sea: and on land the genius of George Stephenson covered England with railroads.]

TOWARDS the close of the last century a bare-legged herd laddie, about eight years old, might have been seen, in a field at Dewley Burn, a little village not far from Newcastle, amusing himself by making clay engines, with bits of hemlock-stalk for imaginary pipes. The child is father of the man, and in after years that little fellow became the inventor of the passenger locomotive, and as the founder of the gigantic railway system which now spreads its fibres over the

length and breadth, not only of our own country, but of the civilized world, the true hero of the half-century.

The second son of a fireman to one of the colliery engines, who had six children and a wife to support on an income of twelve shillings a week, George Stephenson had to begin work while quite a child. At first he was set to look after a neighbour's cows, and keep them from straying and afterwards he was promoted to the work of leading horses at the plough, hoeing turnips, and such like, at a salary of fourpence a day. The lad had always been fond of poking about in his father's engine-house; and his great ambition at this time was to become a fireman like his father. And at length, after being employed in various ways about the colliery, he was, at the age of fourteen, appointed his father's assistant at a shilling a day. The next year he got a situation as foreman on his own account; and "now," said he, when his wages were advanced to twelve shillings a week—"now I'm a made man for life."

The next step he took was to get the place of "plugman" to the same engine that his father attended as fireman, the former post being rather the higher of the two. The business of the plugman is to watch the engine, and see that it works properly—the name being derived from the duty of plugging the tube at the bottom of the shaft, so that the action of the pump should not be interfered with by the exposure of the suction holes. George now devoted himself enthusiastically to the study of the engine under his care. It became a sort of pet with him; and he was never weary of taking it to pieces, cleaning it, putting it together again, and inspecting its various parts with admiration and delight, so that he soon made himself thoroughly master of its method of working and construction.

Eighteen years old by this time, George Stephenson was wholly uneducated. His father's small earnings, and the

large family he had to feed, at a time when provisions were scarce and at war prices, prevented his having any schooling in his early years ; and he now set himself to repair his deficiencies in that respect. His duties occupied him twelve hours a day, so that he had but little leisure to himself ; but he was bent on improving himself, and after the duties of the day were over, went to a night-school kept by a poor teacher in the village of Water-row, where he was now situated, on three nights during the week, to take lessons in reading and spelling, and afterwards in the science of pot-hooks and hangers as well ; so that by the time he was nineteen he was able to read clearly, and to write his own name. Then he took to arithmetic, for which he showed a great predilection. He had always a sum or two by him to work out while at the engine side, and soon made great progress.

Having learned all he could from the village teacher, George Stephenson now began to study mensuration and mathematics at home by himself ; but he also found time to make a number of experiments in the hope of finding out the secret of perpetual motion, and to make shoe-lasts and shoes, as well as mend them. At the end of 1803 his only son, Robert, was born ; and soon after the family removed to Killingworth, seven miles from Newcastle, where George got the place of brakesman. They had not been settled long here when his wife died—a loss which affected George deeply, and attached him all the more intensely to the offspring of their union. At this time everything seemed to go wrong with him. As if his wife's death was not grief enough, his father met with an accident which deprived him of his eyesight and shattered his frame ; George himself was drawn for the militia, and had to pay a heavy sum of money for a substitute ; and with his father, and mother, and his own boy to support, at a time when

taxes were excessive and food dear, he had only a salary of £50 or £60 a year to meet all claims. He was on the verge of despair, and would have emigrated to America, if, fortunately for our country, he had not been unable to raise sufficient money for his passage. So he had to stay in the old country, where a bright and glorious future awaited him, dark and desperate as the prospect then appeared.

About this time a new pit having been sunk in the district where he worked, the engine fixed for the purpose of pumping the water out of the shaft was found a failure. This soon reached George's ears. He walked over to the pit, carefully examined the various parts of the machinery, and turned the matter over in his mind. One day when he was looking at it, and almost convinced that he had discovered the cause of the failure, one of the workmen came up, and asked him if he could tell what was wrong.

"Yes," said George; "and I think I could alter it, and in a week's time send you to the bottom." George offered his services to the engineer. Every expedient had been tried to repair the engine, and all had failed. There could be no harm, if no good, in Stephenson trying his hand on it. So he got leave and set to work. He took the engine entirely to pieces, and in four days had repaired it thoroughly, so that the workmen could get to the bottom and proceed with their labours. George Stephenson's skill as an engine-doctor began to be noised abroad, and secured him the post of engine-wright at Killingworth with a salary of £100 a year.

The idea of constructing a steam-engine to run on the colliery tramroads leading to the shipping place, was now receiving considerable attention from the engineering community. Several schemes had been propounded, and engines actually made; but none of them had been brought into use. A mistaken notion prevailed that the plain round

wheels of an engine would slip round without catching hold of the rails, and that thus no progress would be made; but George Stephenson soon became convinced that the weight of the engine would of itself be sufficient to press the wheels to the rails, so that they could not fail to bite. He turned the subject over and over in his mind, tested his conceptions by countless experiments, and at length completed his scheme. Money for the construction of a locomotive engine on his plan having been supplied by Lord Ravensworth, one was made after many difficulties, and placed upon the tramroad at Killingworth, where it drew a load of thirty tons up a somewhat steep gradient at the rate of four miles an hour. Still there was very little saving in cost, and little advance in speed as compared with horse power, but in a second one, which Stephenson quickly set about constructing, he turned the waste steam into the chimney to increase the draught, and thus puff the fuel into a brisker flame, and create a larger volume of steam to propel the locomotive. The fundamental principles of the engine thus formed remain in operation to this day: and it may in truth be termed the progenitor of the great locomotive family.

XXV.

BALAKLAVA.

W. H. RUSSELL.

[What had aided above all the industrial and commercial growth of England, was the long peace which had prevailed in Europe since the fall of Napoleon. In 1852 however this was broken by a war of England and France against Russia in defence of the Turkish Empire. The war gathered round the fortress of Sebastopol on the Black Sea, which was besieged by the allies; but the besiegers

were soon besieged in their turn by the increasing masses of Russian troops, who not only attacked the positions they held on the plateau south of the town, but strove to cut them off from Balaklava, their main harbour. Here however they were met and defeated by the British forces. The battle of Balaklava has been described by an eye-witness.]

NEVER did the painter's eye rest on a more beautiful scene than I beheld from the ridge.¹ The fleecy vapours still hung around the mountain tops, and mingled with the ascending volumes of smoke; the speck of sea sparkled freshly in the rays of the morning sun, but its light was eclipsed by the flashes which gleamed from the masses of armed men below.

Looking to the left towards the gorge, we beheld six compact masses of Russian infantry, which had just debouched from the mountain passes near the Tchernaya,² and were slowly advancing with solemn stateliness up the valley. Immediately in their front was a regular line of artillery, of at least twenty pieces strong. Two batteries of light guns were already a mile in advance of them, and were playing with energy on the redoubts, from which feeble puffs of smoke came at long intervals. Behind these guns, in front of the infantry, were enormous bodies of cavalry. They were in six compact squares, three on each flank, moving down *en echelon* towards us, and the valley was lit up with the blaze of their sabres and lance points and gay accoutrements. In their front, and extending along the intervals between each battery of guns, were clouds of mounted skirmishers, wheeling and whirling in the front of their march like autumn leaves tossed by the wind. The Zouaves³ close to us were lying like tigers at the spring,

¹ Above the plain of Balaklava.
passed through the valley of Balaklava.
from Algeria.

² The stream which
³ French troops

with ready rifles in hand, hidden chin-deep by the earthworks which run along the line of these ridges on our rear, but the quick-eyed Russians were manœuvring on the other side of the valley and did not expose their columns to attack. Below the Zouaves we could see the Turkish gunners in the redoubts; ⁴ all is confusion as the shells burst over them.

Just as I came up the Russians had carried No. 1 redoubt, the farthest and most elevated of all, and their horsemen were chasing the Turks across the interval which lay between it and redoubt No. 2. At that moment the cavalry, under Lord Lucan, were formed in glittering masses—the Light Brigade, under Lord Cardigan, in advance; the Heavy Brigade, under Brigadier-General Scarlett, in reserve. They were drawn up just in front of their encampment, and were concealed from the view of the enemy by a slight “wave” in the plain. Considerably to the rear of their right, the 93rd Highlanders were drawn up in line, in front of the approach to Balaklava. Above and behind them, on the heights, the marines were visible through the glass, drawn up under arms, and the gunners could be seen ready in the earthworks, in which were placed the heavy ship’s guns. The 93rd had originally been advanced somewhat more into the plain, but the instant the Russians got possession of the first redoubt they opened fire on them from our own guns, which inflicted some injury, and Sir Colin Campbell ⁵ “retired” his men to a better position. Meanwhile the enemy advanced his cavalry rapidly. To our inexpressible disgust we saw the Turks in redoubt No. 2 fly at their approach. They ran in scattered groups across towards redoubt No. 3, and towards Balaklava, but

⁴ *The plain was defended by redoubts manned by Turkish troops*

⁵ *Commander of the Highlanders in the valley; afterwards Lord Clyde.*

the horse hoof of the Cossack was too quick for them, and sword and lance were busily plied among the retreating herd. The yells of the pursuers and pursued were plainly audible. As the lancers and light cavalry of the Russians advanced they gathered up their skirmishers with great speed and in excellent order—the shifting trails of men, which played all over the valley like moonlight on the water, contracted, gathered up, and the little *peleton* in a few moments became a solid column. Then up came their guns, in rushed their gunners to the abandoned redoubt, and the guns of No. 2 redoubt soon played with deadly effect upon the dispirited defenders of No. 3 redoubt. Two or three shots in return from the earthworks, and all is silent. The Turks swarm over the earthworks and run in confusion towards the town, firing their muskets at the enemy as they run. Again the solid column of cavalry opens like a fan, and resolves itself into a long spray of skirmishers. It laps the flying Turk, steel flashes in the air, and down go the poor Moslem quivering on the plain, split through fez and musket-guard to the chin and breast-belt.

There is no support for them. It is evident the Russians have been too quick for us. The Turks have been too quick also, for they have not held their redoubts long enough to enable us to bring them help. In vain the naval guns on the heights fire on the Russian cavalry; the distance is too great for shot or shell to reach. In vain the Turkish gunners in the earthen batteries which are placed along the French entrenchments strive to protect their flying countrymen; their shot fly wide and short of the swarming masses. The Turks betake themselves towards the Highlanders, where they check their flight, and form into companies on the flanks of the Highlanders. As the Russian cavalry on the left of their line crown the hill across the valley, they

perceive the Highlanders drawn up at a distance of some half mile, calmly waiting their approach. They halt, and squadron after squadron flies up from the rear, till they have a body of some 1,500 men along the ridge—lancers and dragoons and hussars. Then they move in two bodies with another in reserve. The cavalry who have been pursuing the Turks on the right are coming up to the ridge beneath us, which conceals our cavalry from view. The heavy brigade in advance is drawn up in two lines. The first line consists of the Scots Greys, and of their old companions in glory, the Enniskillens; the second of the 4th Royal Irish of the 5th Dragoon Guards, and of the 1st Royal Dragoons. The Light Cavalry Brigade is on their left, in two lines also. The silence is oppressive; between the cannon bursts one can hear the champing of bits and the clink of sabres in the valley below. The Russians on their left draw breath for a moment, and then in one grand line dashed at the Highlanders. The ground flies beneath their horses' feet; gathering speed at every stride, they dash on towards that *thin red streak topped with a line of steel*. The Turks fire a volley at eight hundred yards and run. As the Russians come within six hundred yards, down goes that line of steel in front, and out rings a rolling volley of Minié musketry. The distance is too great; the Russians are not checked, but still sweep onward through the smoke, with the whole force of horse and man, here and there knocked over by the shot of our batteries above. With breathless suspense every one awaits the bursting of the wave upon the line of Gaelic rock; but ere they come within one hundred and fifty yards, another deadly volley flashes from the levelled rifle, and carries death and terror into the Russians. They wheel about, open files right and left, and fly back faster than they came. "Bravo, Highlanders! well done!" shout the excited spectators; but events thicken. The High-

landers and their splendid front are soon forgotten, men scarcely have a moment to think of this fact, that the 93rd never altered their formation to receive that tide of horsemen. "No," said Sir Colin Campbell, "I did not think it worth while to form them even four deep!" The ordinary British line, two deep, was quite sufficient to repel the attack of these Muscovite cavaliers.

Our eyes were however turned in a moment on our own cavalry. We saw Brigadier-General Scarlett ride along in front of his massive squadrons. The Russians—evidently *corps d'élite*—their light blue jackets embroidered with silver lace, were advancing on their left, at an easy gallop, towards the brow of the hill. A forest of lances glistened in their rear, and several squadrons of grey-coated dragoons moved up quickly to support them as they reached the summit. The instant they came in sight the trumpets of our cavalry gave out the warning blast which told us all that in another moment we should see the shock of battle beneath our very eyes. Lord Raglan,⁶ all his staff and escort, and groups of officers, Zouaves, French generals and officers, and bodies of French infantry on the height, were spectators of the scene as though they were looking on the stage from the boxes of a theatre. Nearly every one dismounted and sat down, and not a word was said. The Russians advanced down the hill at a slow canter, which they changed to a trot, and at last nearly halted. Their first line was at least double the length of ours—it was three times as deep. Behind them was a similar line, equally strong and compact. They evidently despised their insignificant looking enemy, but their time was come. The trumpets rang out again through the valley, and the Greys and Enniskilleners went right at the centre of the Russian cavalry. The space between them was only a few hundred yards; it was scarce enough to let

⁶ *Commander-in-chief of the British army.*

the horses "gather way," nor had the men quite space sufficient for the full play of their sword arms. The Russian line brings forward each wing as our cavalry advance, and threatens to annihilate them as they pass on. Turning a little to their left, so as to meet the Russian right, the Greys rush on with a cheer that thrills to every heart—the wild shout of the Enniskilleners rises through the air at the same instant. As lightning flashes through a cloud, the Greys and Enniskilleners pierced through the dark masses of Russians. The shock was but for a moment. There was a clash of steel and a light play of sword-blades in the air, and then the Greys and the redcoats disappear in the midst of the shaken and quivering columns. In another moment we see them emerging and dashing on with diminished numbers, and in broken order, against the second line which is advancing against them as fast as it can to retrieve the fortune of the charge. It was a terrible moment. "God help them! they are lost!" was the exclamation of more than one man and the thought of many. With unabated fire the noble hearts dashed at their enemy. It was a fight of heroes. The first line of Russians, which had been smashed utterly by our charge, and had fled off at one flank and towards the centre, were coming back to swallow up our handful of men. By sheer steel and sheer courage Enniskillener and Scot were winning their desperate way right through the enemy's squadrons, and already grey horses and red coats had appeared right at the rear of the second mass, when, with irresistible force, like one bolt from a bow, the 1st Royals, the 4th Dragoon Guards, and the 5th Dragoon Guards, rushed at the remnants of the first line of the enemy, went through it as though it were made of pasteboard, and dashing on the second body of Russians as they were still disordered by the terrible assault of the Greys and their companions, put them to utter rout. This Russian

horse in less than five minutes after it met our dragoons was flying with all its speed before a force certainly not half its strength. A cheer burst from every lip—in the enthusiasm, officers and men took off their caps and shouted with delight, and thus keeping up the scenic character of their position, they clapped their hands again and again.

THE END.

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